

FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS WEEKLY. WHO MAKE MONEY.

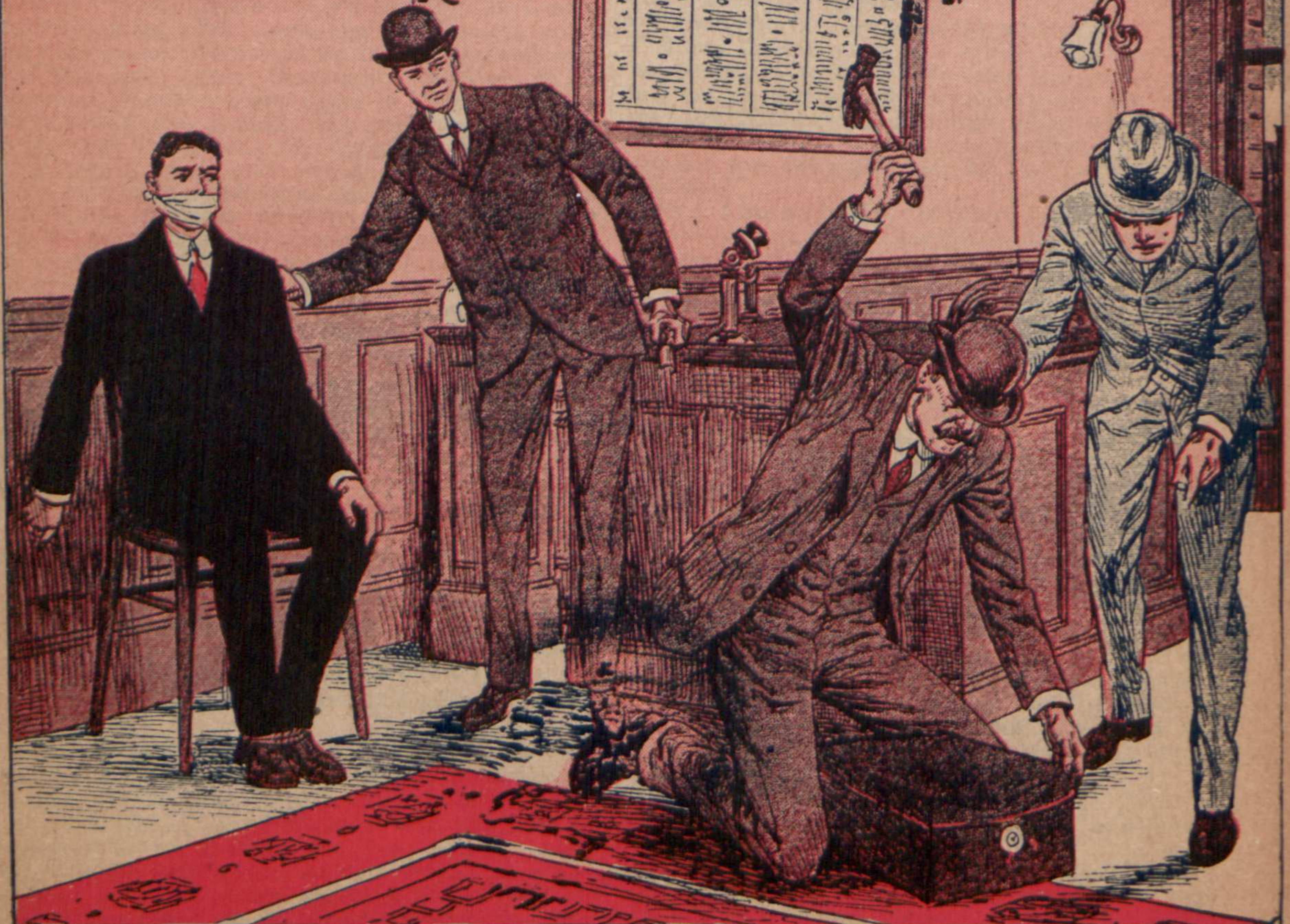
The Young Banker

OR THE MYSTERY OF A MONEY BOX

AND OTHER STORIES

A STORY OF WALL STREET

By A. J. H. Self-Made Man



While the three crooks were intent upon the money box, Harry, bound to the chair and gagged, reached behind with his free hand and pressed the signal button on the wall. His friend in the next office heard the alarm, and hurried to find out why he had been called.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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THE YOUNG BANKER

OR, THE MYSTERY OF A MONEY BOX

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Harry Hazel and the Rev. Mr. Sleek.

"Home—home at last!" cried Harry Hazel, with a thrill of delight, as he rang the front door-bell of the paternal mansion—a small, three-story brownstone house in Harlem, New York City—one pleasant evening early in the fall.

Why shouldn't he be happy? He had been absent six months on a sea voyage for his health in the tropics, after a grueling finish at the academy where he was preparing for college, and now he was back again, thoroughly restored in a physical standpoint, and eager to take part in the next act of life's drama. His cruise had not been altogether uneventful, for the yacht on which he had been a guest was wrecked on a Caribbean key, or small, uninhabited island, and for three months he, the only survivor, was marooned like an ant on a stone surrounded by water. He had to support life as best he could on a meager diet of shell-fish, coconuts, and an occasional seabird he managed to bring down with a stone, and cook in a primitive way over a fire of driftwood which he ignited by means of a small magnifying glass.

He was rescued at last by a native craft engaged in the turtle-catching business and carried to a port where he secured passage on a fruit steamer to New York. The steamer passed Sandy Hook late that afternoon, got through quarantine, and Harry hurried ashore as soon as he could, and rushed uptown on an elevated train. The unlucky yacht had been duly reported lost in the New York newspapers by one of her crew picked up at sea half dead, and who shortly afterward died in a hospital, but Harry was ignorant of that. He did not doubt that his father was greatly worried over the lack of news concerning the vessel, which should have reached port ten weeks since.

The old saying that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" no doubt was realized by his widowed father, for he (Harry) was the only chip left of the old block, but what mattered that now that he was kicking his heels on the stoop ready to rush into the old man's arms as soon as the door was opened, with the gleeful shout of a schoolboy released from his studies on the eve of the long vacation? The door opened, but a strange man servant stood in the opening and looked at him inquiringly.

"Hello!" cried Harry. "Who are you?"

He had expected to be welcomed by Lizzie, the maid, with whom he was a great favorite.

"Sir!" replied the man, in a dignified way and a displeased look.

"Are you a new servant? Where's Lizzie?"

"Hexcuse me, young man. I don't understand your remark. 'Ave you called to see the Rev. Mr. Sleek?"

"The Rev. Mr. Sleek? I should say not. I don't know the gentleman."

"Then you 'ave come to the wrong 'ouse."

Harry looked up at the number over the door, wondering if he had really rung the wrong door-bell in his hurry and excitement, for the house was one of a row of dwellings all of which were as much alike as one pea is to another. No. The number was the right one. He had not made any mistake.

"No, I haven't. This is where I live."

"Where you live!" ejaculated the man, opening his eyes, for the boy he had never seen before.

"Hexcuse me. I 'aven't the honor of knowing you. Maybe it's the next 'ouse you are looking for."

"Ridiculous!" cried Harry impatiently. "This is my father's house, and I live here. Step aside and let me enter."

"The Rev. Mr. Sleek 'asn't any family. 'E's been living 'ere alone hever since the death of the late lamented Mr. 'Azal, the Wall Street banker."

"What!" cried Harry, his face growing as white as a sheet. "My father—dead! Good heavens, you can't mean that!"

He would have fallen against the servant had he not grasped the side of the door, where he swayed like a tree in a high wind. The astonished man stared at him in wonder. He had heard that the late banker had a son who was understood to have been lost on the ill-fated yacht Rosalie a few weeks since. It was the shock of the boy's presumed death which had been too much for George Hazel, whose head was weak, and the news had killed him.

"It cawn't be that you're 'Arry 'Azal, who was lost at sea about three months ago?" ejaculated the servant.

"I'm Harry Hazel. If I was lost at sea I wouldn't be here now. But my father——" said the boy in a broken voice.

"Step hinside, young man. It's hevident you hought to see the Rev. Mr. Sleek. If you are 'Arry 'Azal, 'e will be greatly surprised to see you. You will find 'im hin your late father's li-

brary hupstairs, which you know where it is I'll be bound. But perhaps I 'ad better carry the news of your hunexpected return to 'im so 'e will be prepared for the meeting. When a chap is dead and comes to life hoff a sudden, it is apt to give one a shock, don't you know, if you see 'im without a warning of what is coming," said the servant.

He led the way upstairs, and Harry followed like one in the throes of an unexpected dream. He could not realize that his father was dead. It did not seem such terrible news could be true.

"Wait 'ere, Mr. 'Azel, till I break the news to the Rev. Mr. Sleek."

He knocked, and was told to enter.

"What a surprise this will be to the marster of the 'ouse," thought the servant as he walked in and closed the door after him.

"Well, Atkins, what is it?" said the tall, sanctimonious-looking personage clad in solemn black, with a band of crape about his arm, who sat writing at the desk by the window overlooking the back yard.

"I awsk your pawdon, Mr. Sleek, for intruding upon you, but something vonderful 'as 'appened."

"Indeed. Might I ask what it is?" said the reverend gentleman curiously.

"I can 'ardly credit myself, sir."

"What can you hardly credit?"

"Dead people coming to life, sir, in the most hunexpected way."

"Who do you refer to?"

"The late Mr. 'Azel's son 'Arry, sir."

"What!" cried Mr. Sleek, half rising in his chair. "What do you mean? The boy was lost at sea three months ago. The fact is undoubted. The loss of the yacht and all aboard was reported by the only eye-witness."

"So I 'ave 'eard, sir, but there must 'ave been some mistake."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because a boy who calls 'imself 'Ary 'Azel 'as just called, sir. 'E's houtside the door now. I took the liberty to bring 'im hup because 'e insisted on coming hin—said it was 'is father's 'ouse, don't you know—and I thought you'd better see 'im. Hif 'e's an himpostor you vill know what to do vith 'im; but it's my opinion 'e's the genuine harticle."

The Rev. Mr. Sleek stared at the servant. The news certainly staggered him. He was fully persuaded that Harry Hazel had gone to the bottom with the yacht Rosalie. That the boy had escaped and had returned home three months after the disaster appeared to him to be incredible. If it was true—the reverend gentleman saw certain complications ahead for which he was hardly prepared. He certainly showed no sign of pleasure at the thought of the boy's return to life, and this was hardly in keeping with his cloth. He was a minister of the Gospel—a sort of free lance, it is true—but still a minister. At any rate his attire, the prefix to his name, and the fact that he was at the head of a missionary society for the religious enlightenment and humane advancement of the benighted Hottentots proclaimed him as such. He felt the necessity of hiding his feelings before his servant, so he said in a slow and half-choked tone:

"Show the visitor in, Atkins."

The servant bowed, opened the door, and said:

"Walk hin, Mr. 'Azel. The Rev. Mr. Sleek vill see you."

Harry walked in and stopped near the door. He knew he was in his father's library, for he recognized every feature of the room by heart.

"Take a seat, young man," said the reverend gentleman, after surveying his young visitor from head to foot. "You can go, Atkins."

The servant bowed and walked out, but being a curious individual, he remained outside with his ear at the keyhole. Harry looked enough like his father to assure Mr. Sleek that Harry Hazel really stood before him. The boy stepped slowly forward, with a world of sorrow in his face. The presence of the strange, clerical gentleman at his father's desk, in the attitude of a man who assumed undisputed possession, told the boy that the servant had spoken the truth—his father was dead, and another had taken his place, but by what right was yet to be learned. Harry sank into the seat beside the desk and, his feelings giving way, he burst into tears. The Rev. Mr. Sleek sat back, composed, his hands in the form of an apex, as ministers have a penchant for doing, and waited for the lad to recover.

"You are the Rev. Mr. Sleek, I understand?" said Harry at length.

"That is my name," replied the clerical gentleman suavely.

"You are in charge of this house?"

"Such is the fact, since the untimely death of my lamented and good friend, George Hazel."

"Then my father is dead?" said the boy in a choked voice.

"Am I to understand that you are his son Harry, who went to sea on the yacht Rosalie, which was reported lost somewhere in the Caribbean Sea?"

"I am. The yacht was wrecked on a small island, and I am the only one of the party who escaped."

"You are mistaken. One sailor of the crew was picked up and brought to this city, where he died shortly after his arrival. He gave out that he was the only survivor. Since you are Harry Hazel, a fact I will not dispute, though I have never had the pleasure of meeting you before, two evidently survived the wreck. When the news of the loss of the yacht was published, your father naturally believed you had gone down with the others, and the shock was, I may say, too much for his weak heart to stand, and he never rallied from it. As the yacht was lost three months ago, I shall be glad to learn how it is you did not turn up until now."

"That is easily explained. The yacht went to pieces on a small, low island, and there I was marooned until ten days ago," replied Harry.

The boy gave a brief outline of his experience on the island, and Mr. Sleek did not doubt that he told the truth.

"It is unfortunate, Master Hazel, that things happened as they did," said the reverend gentleman, "because your father, when dying, in the belief that he was childless, executed a paper leaving everything of which he died possessed to the Missionary Society for the Religious Enlightenment and Humane Advancement of the Benighted Hottentots of South America, of which society I have the honor to be the acting head. This paper leaves you entirely out in the cold. As that

is unfair to you, now that you have, as it were, returned to life, I shall use my best endeavors to arrange some kind of a legal settlement by which you will be suitably provided for," said Mr. Sleek, a benignant expression resting like a halo over his smoothly shaven face, as though the essence of human kindness was flowing through every vein in his body.

Harry hardly noticed the meaning of his words, for the great loss he had suffered by his father's death overshadowed everything else. Nevertheless one thing stood out prominently before him, and which he felt he must have an immediate explanation of, and that was the dominant position the reverend gentleman held in his father's house. He had never heard of the Rev. Mr. Sleek before, nor had he ever heard his father mention the man's name. When and under what circumstances had the reverend head of the missionary society and his father come together, and through what astonishing combination of affairs had he taken his dead father's place. Harry felt that he could not grapple with the situation until he knew the facts, which were to him a mystery, so he put the question to Mr. Sleek. Evidently that gentleman was expecting to be catechised on the subject by his young visitor, and was prepared to satisfy his curiosity.

CHAPTER II.—Which Explains a Few Things.

The Rev. Mr. Sleek uttered an *ahem* like a man clearing his throat, and proceeded to put the boy in possession of some of the following facts: While seeking contributions, of which his missionary society stood in great need, he had been introduced to George Hazel, at that gentleman's private bank in the Wall Street district. This happened about a week after Harry sailed for the tropics on the yacht. Mr. Hazel had a large and generous heart, and the eloquence of the reverend gentleman having impressed him with the sad condition of the benighted Hottentots, both individually and collectively, he had been induced to contribute liberally to what he regarded as a worthy cause. Furthermore, as he was lonesome in his home after the departure of his only son, and the Rev. Mr. Sleek having expressed dissatisfaction with the conditions he experienced at the boarding-house where he sojourned, averring that the young people who largely predominated made fun of his charitable mission, Mr. Hazel prevailed upon the reverend gentleman to make his home with him temporarily while his son was away on his trip.

Mr. Sleek accepted the invitation, and forthwith had his trunk and other belongings removed to the Hazel home. The clergyman was a fluent and persuasive talker. He regaled the banker with an interesting account of the Hottentot country, where he averred he had spent many years of his life, devoting all his energies to the amelioration of the benighted condition of the natives, with whose unhappy condition he said he deeply sympathized. These people had souls the same as those of the more favored people of the earth, and the society regarded it as its duty to lead them out of the darkness of original sin and pristine ignorance into the broad and glorious light of

Christianity and beneficent knowledge. The Hottentots, the reverend gentleman averred to his new friend the banker, had been sadly overlooked by the regular missionary societies, cwing, probably, to their geographical position and other difficulties.

Mr. Hazel, not being familiar with the country of the Hottentots, thought he said he had heard that it was not so inaccessible as Mr. Sleek maintained it was, felt bound to accept the statement of one who had spent so many years of his life on the spot, and by virtue thereof might be presumed to know whereof he spoke. Finding his host such a ready and interested listener, Mr. Sleek dilated upon the character, habits and miserable condition of the natives under the unfortunate circumstances in which Heaven was pleased to place them. He told of the splendid efforts made in their behalf by his society, but unfortunately those efforts were greatly hampered through lack of funds. The result was he secured a second donation from the sympathizing banker.

Thus matters went on at the Hazel home, the missionary daily strengthening his hold upon the good opinion of his host. Then came the news of the supposed loss of Harry. The banker wilted under it like a flower scorched by the fiery breath of a *siroco*. His heart gave out, and the Rev. Mr. Sleek, fortified by the verdict of the physician, saw that his graft was about to fail him. Naturally this was distasteful to him. His active brain, working overtime, suggested a splendid coup. Having learned that the reported death of the boy removed the only person Mr. Hazel cared for, or had any claims upon his property worth considering, he hurried to a cheap lawyer and had a document prepared which would transfer to him, in trust for the missionary society, all of the banker's property, as well as his business, if he could prevail on the dying man to sign it. He lost no time in getting back to the house with the paper, accompanied by the lawyer's clerk to act as witness, but to his consternation he found on reaching there that Mr. Hazel had expired a short time before.

Apparently his brilliant scheme had crumbled into dust. The Rev. Mr. Sleek, however, was a man of infinite resource. After lamenting the death of his friend, he took the clerk aside, and telling him it was a shame that the banker's property should revert to the State for lack of a legitimate heir, when its diversion to the missionary society in the interests of the benighted Hottentots would do so much good, he suggested that, as Mr. Hazel could hardly be regarded as dead until he was cold, it would be the proper thing to try and secure his signature to the paper by placing a pen in his fingers and guiding it in the way it should go.

If the clerk was willing to witness that kind of a signature, and swear in court to its genuineness, he, Mr. Sleek, would see to it that the young man was taken care of in a generous way by the society. The clerk who was a sandy complexioned chap, by the name of Spencer, hesitated at the risk involved, incidentally remarking that his conscience was rather a delicate one. Thereupon Mr. Sleek, who knew this man, mentioned a consideration, payable regularly once a month, which he said ought to satisfy any healthy conscience that the benighted Hottentots had a greater claim on

the dead man's estate than the graft-ridden State of New York. After some further demur, in the course of which the aforesaid consideration was enlarged to cover the clerk's scruples, the matter was arranged and the necessary signature obtained, with the clerk's John Hancock attached as witness to it.

After Mr. Hazel's funeral the deed transferring all of the banker's real and personal property, including his business, was duly recorded by the lawyer, and Mr. Sleek took possession of the same in the name of the missionary society, the headquarters of which was given as Cape Town, South Africa. He immediately discharged the old servants at the house, and in their places hired a new cook, a new chambermaid, and a man named Atkins. The reverend gentleman then called on old John Prescott, the white-haired cashier of the private bank, and conferred with him about disposing of the business. The old gentleman expressed surprise that his late employer should have made such a singular disposition of his property, but Mr. Sleek assured him there was nothing remarkable in the act of such an excellent man as he had found Mr. Hazel to be, by which that gentleman had practically bequeathed his all in the interests of charity, since he had no blood kin to consider, and that his soul would be vastly benefited by adding his mite to a glorious cause.

The cashier could not dispute the right of the banker to dispose of his possessions as the thought fit, and so he said no more. He advised the reverend gentleman not to be in a hurry to sell the business, for reasons which he advanced, and which Mr. Sleek admitted were good, and so the matter was deferred for the time being, and Mr. Prescott was authorized to conduct the bank till further notice as his judgment dictated. Thus matters stood when Harry Hazel turned up rather to the discomfiture of the astute Mr. Sleek, who, however, was by no means thrown off his balance by this unexpected turn of Fortune's wheel.

He was well able to protect himself against all hazard, and this he proposed to do by taking the easiest way, which he decided in his own mind was to turn over the banking business to the boy in full settlement for all claim against his late father's estate. If Harry refused, he was ready to stand pat on the strength of the transfer deed, and fight the case out in court. But being a religious gentleman, and recognizing the boy's right to half a loaf, though it was a small half, so to speak, he preferred to reach a settlement with as little friction as possible. Having explained to Harry as much as he thought proper of the foregoing, Mr. Sleek told the boy that he was welcome to avail himself of his hospitality as long as he cared to do so.

"Your room is just as you left it, young man, and it will give me great pleasure to have you re-occupy it," said the reverend gentleman. "You shall board here free of expense, and no one shall question your right to come and go as you choose. I trust you will avail yourself of my offer, for I feel you are entitled to every consideration in view of your late father's generous donation to the missionary society which I have the honor to represent."

"While I thank you for your offer, sir, still I don't like to consider myself as an object of bounty in the house which, now that my dear

father is gone, I cannot help regard as my property," said Harry.

"It should be your property, I admit," replied Mr. Sleek, in oily tones, "but owing to its legal transfer, with all your father died possessed of, to the society, I regret that you have no valid right to it, nor to anything else."

"Am I to consider myself a pauper, then?"

"By no means. I propose to see that you are provided for. You are entitled to it. I shall see my lawyer to-morrow and arrange, if possible, for the immediate release to you of your father's banking business. That, I understand, represents a fair half of the estate. At any rate, it represents the productive part of it, and will provide you with an excellent living. I think the missionary society will be satisfied with this house and its contents, which is free and clear, and can readily be sold when, in my judgment, that seems advisable. When you have reflected upon the great and glorious mission the society is engaged in—the rescue of the benighted Hottentots from the darkness of ignorance—beside which the gloom of the Middle Ages is not to be compared with—you cannot but coincide with your father's benevolent act when, believing you were dead, he turned over to me, in trust, for those heathen people."

Harry made no reply. Indeed, he was too grieved and bewildered to declare his exact sentiments on the subject. And during the pause that ensued the dinner-bell rang in the basement, and Mr. Sleek, getting up with the alacrity which bespeaks a good digestion, said that the chief meal of the day was about to be served, and it would afford him the most extreme felicity to be honored by the lad's company. Yielding to the reverend gentleman's insistence, Harry accompanied Mr. Sleek downstairs, like one who was not yet wholly master of himself.

CHAPTER III.—Harry Goes to Wall Street.

Harry repaired to his room after dinner and found everything as he left it. He sat down in the semi-gloom to think over his altered condition, and shed many more tears over his father's memory. He had come back feeling like a bird, and the blow he encountered had left him sadly altered. He was not the same boy in spirit who dashed up the front steps to the stoop two hours before, and no one will wonder thereat. It is the unexpected that is always happening in life, but Harry never realized the fact before. He went to bed at last, still undecided as to what he was up against, and slept till awakened by the breakfast bell. Mr. Sleek greeted him with the same distinguished consideration that he had shown him the evening before, mildly hoping he had slept well.

The meal passed in comparative silence, the reverend gentleman finding that Harry showed no great interest in his reminiscences of the Hottentot country. After breakfast Harry said he was going out, and Mr. Sleek assured him that was his privilege, at the same time telling him that lunch was served at one, and dinner always at seven. Harry started straight for his late father's banking office, which was on the ground floor of a Wall Street building, two or three steps below the level of the sidewalk, the other half

of the space being shared by a brokerage firm. He was a great favorite with old John Prescott, the cashier, whom he had learned from Mr. Sleek was in charge of the business pending its disposal.

No changes had been made in the small office force, and so Harry expected to find things there as he had last seen them. He was anxious to talk to the old cashier, and get his advice as to how he should act. It was some consolation to the bereaved boy to know that Mr. Sleek intended to hand over the business to him; but that did not remove the sting from the thought that a stranger, who he had to confess he half distrusted, and did not at all like, was to retain hold on the major part of the estate, even for the benefit of an alleged worthy cause. Harry knew more about the Hottentots than his father had, and he did not think they stood in so much need of outside help as Mr. Sleek averred they did.

Besides, he knew nothing whatever about the standing of the missionary society of which the reverend gentleman said he was the head. He would have placed more confidence in that organization had Mr. Sleek been less demonstrative as to its merits, and his own disinterestedness in devoting his life to its proper guidance and the objects it was supposed to represent. He suspected that Mr. Sleek had more than one side, and that he knew how to nurse a good thing. Still he was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt until he learned to know him better. There was little change in the city to Harry's eye during his six months' absence, and particularly was this the case in Wall Street, where no new skyscrapers had recently been erected. At last he reached his destination. There was no change there. His father's name was still on the big window, and in it was the same display of foreign and domestic coin, bills and bonds. Looking through the glass he saw the white-headed old cashier waiting on a caller, and there was no change about him.

"How glad he'll be to see me," cried the boy, with a thrill of satisfaction over the fact that he knew he had one disinterested friend in the venerable John Prescott, who had worked for his father for a quarter of a century, and though many years the banker's senior, still survived him.

Then Harry, overlooking the fact that he was supposed to be dead, and thinking only of greeting his friend the cashier, rushed in as the customer left Prescott at liberty.

"Mr. Prescott, how are you?" he cried, shoving his arm across the counter.

The cashier turned around and looked at him. Then he gave a gasp and his jaw dropped.

"Good heavens!" he cried, grasping the inner edge of the counter. "It can't be you are Harry Hazel—not dead!"

"Sure I'm Harry Hazel, and I'm not dead by a good deal. I've just got back, the only survivor of the wreck of the Rosalie."

The bookkeeper and the junior clerk attracted by the cashier's excited speech, looked toward the counter, and they started in amazement on beholding Harry's well-known features.

"Harry—Harry!" cried the old man, the tears starting into his eyes and his voice shaking with emotion. "My dear boy! You have given me a great shock, but heaven knows how delighted I am

to see you alive and well, when we all supposed you were lost at sea."

He shook the boy's hand as though he never meant to stop.

"Come around into the private office. Come right around."

He met the boy at the private entrance and pulled him into the little room where his father's desk stood, shutting the door after him.

"Have you just reached the city?" said the old man tremulously.

"No. I arrived last night and went straight home—"

He stopped with a gulp in his throat, and the tears rushed into his eyes. He was about to say home, but he recollected that the family mansion was no longer a home to him—that his father was dead.

"You have learned the sad intelligence, then?" said the cashier, in a tone of sympathy.

"Yes. My father is no more. He is dead and buried these three months. The news of the loss of the yacht killed him."

"You saw the reverend—"

"Mr. Sleek—yes. He appears to have got around my father before he died, and is in position of everything that rightfully belongs to me."

"But he shall not keep it," said the old man energetically. "If there is justice in law you shall recover your property. You must contest his claim at once. I have a few thousand saved up in bank. I will hand every dollar of it to you to fight for your rights. If necessary, I will mortgage my little house. You must get what is yours by every right under the sun."

"Thank you, Mr. Prescott, but I may not need to accept your generous offer. Mr. Sleek told me last evening that he recognizes my right to at least a half of my father's property, and he said he intended to see his lawyer to-day about arranging for the release in my favor of this business, which he said was the productive part of the estate, and would furnish me with a good living."

"Mr. Sleek told you that?"

"He did."

"It is not enough. You should have the house, too. It's easily worth thirty thousand dollars."

"I'm afraid he will contest my claim to that."

"Let him. We will fight him."

"We won't talk about that now. He has a legal transfer deed to everything, and from the little I know about law, the burden of a fight will rest on the plaintiff. Undue influence would have to be brought to be the basis of a suit, and that will have to be proved. I think the easiest way will be the best. Let me get hold of this business first. That will furnish me with the sinews of war in case I should decide to make a contest."

"You have a clear head, Harry. Excuse the impetuosity of an old man who looks on you almost as a son. You are almost the image of my dear, departed employer—a man than whom there was none kinder, more generous, or noble. Ah! why was not I, old and withered, with the snows of life's winter in my hair, not taken, and he, still vigorous and good for many years yet, left to pass a few more milestones in age's calendar? The ways of Heaven are inscrutable, and we may not question them," said the old man, in a broken voice.

Harry grasped the old cashier's hand feelingly. Then they spoke about the banker's last days in the office, how he had been all right up to the day that the news reached him of the loss of the yacht. He got the intelligence on his return home, and he never came back to the bank. Harry had been closeted with John Prescott for half an hour, when the junior clerk knocked and said that a depositor wanted to see the cashier, so Harry left the room and went outside to astonish the clerk and bookkeeper with a brief account of his experiences while marooned on the Caribbean key. The two employees said they were very glad to know that Harry had escaped the fate that befell the others on the ill-fated yacht, and they sympathized with him over the death of his father. Harry remained downtown most of the day, and returned to his old home about five o'clock. He was admitted by Atkins, who told him that Mr. Sleek wished to see him in the library. The boy went to that room and was received in the same oily way by the reverend gentleman. The clergyman told him that he had, in accordance with his promise, seen his lawyer, and that he had been told he could turn over the banking business to the boy in accordance with any arrangement he chose to enter into, since as trustee for the missionary society he had full command over the gift presented to the Hottentot cause by the late Mr. Hazel.

"You will therefore go with me to the law office in the morning and we will get the matter over with right away," said Mr. Sleek, with a benevolent smile. "The expenses of the transfer will be borne by the society, and once the documents are signed, all you will have to do will be to place yours on record in the County Clerk's office, and then start for Wall Street and enter into complete and undisputed possession of your father's business. In dealing thus fairly with you, young man, I am only following the Christian principle that we should do to others as we wish others to do to us. That's the golden rule," and the reverend gentleman leaned back in his chair and beamed upon the boy, as if he felt he was doing Harry a very great favor indeed by yielding a slice of the donation which legally belonged to him as trustee for the society interested in the benighted Hottentots.

Harry nodded his head as a matter of form, not because he was particularly impressed by the Christian principle to which Mr. Sleek claimed credit. The more he saw of the reverend gentleman the more he disliked and distrusted him. He even had some doubts concerning the actual existence of the missionary society that Mr. Sleek asserted he had the honor to be head of. In fact, he suspected that Mr. Sleek was a grafter, pure and simple, masquerading under the disguise of a minister of the Gospel. He believed that it was policy to fall in with the reverend gentleman's views, since he was in no financial position to contest the deed of transfer. It did not occur to him that there was any flim-flam business about the deed.

He accepted it as a genuine expression of his father's sentiments on the eve of his death, though he was fairly satisfied that Mr. Sleek had influenced his father to sign it. If the reverend gentleman thought Harry Hazel felt grateful to-

ward him for giving up a small half of the property, the whole of which rightfully belonged to him, he was never more mistaken in his life. In due time dinner was announced, and Harry went down to the dining-room with Mr. Sleek to partake of it. Next morning they rode downtown to the office of Mr. Sleek's lawyer, to whom Harry was introduced. The boy had no great acquaintance among lawyers. As a body he was not favorably disposed to them. He had read so many novels and tales in which a lawyer was represented as a spider who enticed clients into his web, entangled them in the sophistries of the law, and sucked their bank accounts dry, that he was half afraid of the profession.

At any rate he wasn't attracted to Mr. Simpson, Mr. Sleek's legal adviser. The documents were ready for signing. The first was the transfer paper, and this was handed to the reverend gentleman to sign. The red-headed clerk, Spencer, then signed it as witness. The second paper was spread before Harry, and he was requested to affix his signature. He found that it was a complete renunciation of all his rights as his father's heir to all and any interest in his father's estate in consideration of the transfer to him absolutely of the Hazel banking business at No. — Wall Street. The astute Mr. Sleek had taken this additional precaution to make himself undisputed master of the bulk of the estate. Harry objected to signing the document on general principles.

"Why is it necessary when the deed of transfer signed by my father conveyed his entire estate to you in trust for your society?" he said to Mr. Sleek.

The reverend gentleman replied that he was acting on the advice of his legal representative.

"It is a mere matter of form," put in Lawyer Simpson. "Its purpose is to cover any loophole that might hereinafter lead to a disagreement between you and Mr. Sleek."

"Why should we have any disagreement?" said Harry ingenuously.

"There is no reason why you should, since Mr. Sleek is treating you quite handsomely; but the unexpected often happens, and it is the business of a good lawyer to interpose a substantial barrier in the interest of his client."

"But I don't like to sign the paper," said Harry.

"Unless you do, the business of transferring the banking business to you cannot proceed to a conclusion."

Mr. Simpson, having made that ultimatum sufficiently plain, said nothing more. Harry saw that he had to sign the paper or get nothing. He resented the squeeze, and for a moment thought of making a threat to contest in court the transfer deed which bore his father's name. He decided on reflection that such a course was too risky in his case, so he signed the document unwillingly. The lawyer then handed him the paper which gave him the banking business, and advised him to have it recorded on his way downtown. Mr. Sleek shook hands with him and wished him luck, and said he need be in no hurry to leave his late father's house, as he was very welcome there. Harry then took his departure and started for Wall Street.

CHAPTER IV.—The Emergency Signal.

On his way downtown Harry filed the deed of transfer and waited for a certified copy of the same, which he received for the customary fee. When he reached the office which he could now claim as his own, he handed the paper to the old cashier to look over.

"It seems to be all right, Harry," said John Prescott. "You are now a young banker, and though the business is a small one, it will turn you in a fair profit. I will act as your general adviser, and as you are under age it will be necessary for me to continue to sign all checks, under the authorization issued to me by Mr. Sleek, and which it will now be necessary for you to sign as the new owner of the business."

Harry decided that it was not necessary to make any change in the sign on the window, except to add his name in very small letters as successor. Later he made the same addition to the bank's printed matter, such as letter-heads, envelopes, etc. It was with a proud sense of satisfaction that Harry took possession of his father's private room, at the back of the little bank, and realized that he was in business for himself—that he was a young banker. For a while the new sensation banished the unpleasant reflection that a stranger was in possession of his home, from which he had departed as soon as he found suitable lodgings for himself.

He carried away without opposition everything that belonged to him. Mr. Sleek also magnanimously permitted him to take many mementos belonging to his father. They were not worth a whole lot in the reverend gentleman's opinion, but to Harry their value was great from a sentimental point of view. Many of the smaller articles came from his father's desk, and being at a loss for something to pack them in, Mr. Sleek handed him an empty money-box belonging to the late Mr. Hazel, from which he had removed a number of bonds and shares of stock in an industrial company in which the dead banker was interested. Mr. Sleek, on investigation, found these evidences of indebtedness had but a small market value, and were difficult to dispose of, so he put them aside for future disposition. If the reverend gentleman had known the money-box better it would have been the last thing he would have tossed so carelessly to the boy; but he didn't know that this particular box held an important secret, and he lived to regret having let it pass out of his possession. Harry carried the money-box to his office, placed the articles he had stowed in it on and in his desk, and then used the box to hold papers and other things.

The young banker expected that Mr. Sleek would sell the house, realize on the rest of his late father's property, and start for South Africa. The reverend gentleman, however, seemed in no rush to get back to the country of the benighted Hottentots, for whom he expressed so much consideration. New York appeared to be good enough for him. It is true the real estate market was dull, and the house would not have brought its real value. It is also a fact that the financial market was in the dumps, and the price of the securities held by Mr. Sleek, in trust for his society, went below par. At any rate the clergy-

man found the house very much to his liking, and being well supplied with money, none of which found its way to South Africa in spite of his allegations while canvassing for donations that the society was sadly hampered for funds to carry out its beneficent purposes, he made himself at home in Harlem.

In the meanwhile Harry conducted his banking business under the eye of the old cashier, who felt happy to serve the son of his old friend and employer. It was well along in October, and business was fairly active in Wall Street. Harry kept all his father's customers, and managed to add a few new ones. One day the young banker heard a couple of well-known stock-brokers talking about an expected rise in copper. He gathered from their talk that Idaho Copper, which was selling at \$5 a share, was certain to rise to \$15, owing to a combination between those who controlled the company and other large copper interests. Here was the chance for those who got in on the ground floor to make a bunch of money.

The prospect somewhat excited the boy, and he determined to avail himself of it as far as he was able to do. He was afraid that Mr. Prescott would oppose the idea as being too risky for him to undertake. The old man did not believe in Wall Street speculation. He could raise \$2,500 on certain securities he had without the cashier being the wiser of it, and that would enable him to buy 500 shares of Idaho. He hated to do anything without consulting the old gentleman, who, he knew, had his best interests at heart. It looked underhand and mean, even though he had a perfect right to risk his property. If the deal went wrong he would have to admit what he had done. If it was the success he counted on, he would be several thousand ahead, and he could keep his secret.

After much cogitation he allowed the temptation to get the better of him, and taking the securities to a money-lender, he raised about seventy per cent. of their market value, and going to the little bank on Nassau street, in preference to a Curb broker, he bought the 500 shares outright, and two days later received the certificates of Idaho stock. He dumped everything out of his money-box, put the certificates in it and placed the box in his closet. Harry made a number of new friends in the Street, outside of his customers, and among the rest a boy of his own age named Tom Beasley, who worked in the brokerage office on the other side of the central partition.

Tom was margin clerk for his firm, and expected to be promoted at Christmas. Nearly every day he and Harry went out to lunch together, and quite frequently they went home in each other's company. Tom was something of an amateur electrician, and one Saturday afternoon, after arrangement with Harry, he installed a signal wire from the young banker's private room through the wainscoting up outside to the ceiling of the passage and across through the dividing partition, thence down to a point behind his own desk. They familiarized themselves with the Morse alphabet, and thereafter by pushing the buttons in their respective offices they could carry on a conversation without any one but themselves knowing anything about the device.

Thus when either was ready to go to lunch he would convey the fact over the wire, and when

Harry was ready to go home in the afternoon, about the time that Tom's work was over for the day, he would signal his friend and ask him how soon he would be ready to quit. Neither dreamed that the time was coming when the wire would prove of special value to Harry, at least. One Saturday afternoon about the first week in December, shortly after Harry bought the Idaho Copper shares, and when they had gone up to \$8, much to his satisfaction, the young banker was detained by the necessity of writing a number of letters to old school friends. He telegraphed the fact to Tom so his friend would not wait for him. Tom ticked back word that he, too, was going to remain a couple of hours to pull up on his work.

"I'll be through before you are," returned Harry, "and I'll wait for you."

"All right," answered Tom. "I'll let you know when I'm ready to go."

The clerical force in both offices left shortly before one, and the two boys locked their front doors and returned to their desks. An hour passed and three men stopped at the street door of the banking office. They looked in through the window and saw that the place appeared to be untenanted, as they expected. One of them, by the dexterous manipulation of a skeleton key, opened the door, and the three entered, closing the door behind them, but not locking it.

"We'll find the money-box in the back office, very likely," said the leader, which showed they were aware of the existence of the article in question, and that they were after it. They made their way down the passage, opened the door of the private room, and unexpectedly came face to face with the young banker, who had heard their stealthy footsteps and left his desk to see what it meant. The surprise was mutual, and for a moment the situation was strained. Then Harry cried out: "What are you people doing in here, and how did you get in?"

"We came here on business," said the leader coolly.

"Business! And the office closed! I locked the street door. How did you manage to enter?"

"Easily enough. The door was open. You only thought you locked it."

"I know I locked it," responded the young banker with emphasis. "You must have forced the door, and that means your visit here is not an honest one. Take yourselves off at once or I'll telephone for the police."

Harry sprang for his desk, but before he could reach the receiver of his telephone the three men flung themselves upon him and bore him to the floor. In a twinkling he was gagged to prevent him giving an outcry, then he was placed in a chair, tied to it and shoved against the wall. They did not take the trouble to secure his arms, as they expected their stay in the office would be brief, and while they were there they could keep their eye on him.

"Now for the money-box," said the leader, looking around.

That article was not in sight, so the men hunted for it. They discovered it in the closet.

"Now let's be off," said one of the men.

"Do you suppose I intend to carry it through the street?" said the leader.

"How else are you going to get away with it?"

"I don't want the box, but what's in it. My orders are to break it open and secure the important— What was that?" cried the speaker, looking over his shoulder at the prisoner, but seeing nothing suspicious.

And yet something very important was going on which the rascals failed to get on to. When they pushed Harry and the chair against the wall they unconsciously placed him within reach of the electric push button. While the three crooks were intent on the money-box, Harry, bound to the chair, and gagged, reached behind with his free hand and pressed the signal button in the wall. His friend in the next office heard the alarm, and taking a pistol from his desk drawer, hurried to find out why he had been called. It was the answering signal which had attracted the leader's attention.

CHAPTER V.—Mr. Sleek Shows a Strong Interest in the Money-Box.

Harry ticked off the following on the push-button:

"Tom: There are three crooks in my office. They have me bound and gagged, but I have the use of one hand, and am within reach of the button. These rascals are robbing me. Telephone for the police, then come into the bank with any help you can pick up. Hurry, for time is precious. Don't answer."

Tom was a wide-awake young fellow, and he understood the situation in the next office, thanks to the electric wire arrangement. He called up Police Headquarters, explained what was going on in the little bank, and asked for help. Then he pulled a revolver out of his desk and started for the door. In the meantime the crook leader had pulled a small hammer out of his pocket and was striking the end of the money-box with it. The box was stronger than he had figured on, and was giving him a lot of trouble. One crook stood near Harry while the other watched the leader. Then something happened. The door of the private office was pushed open and Tom stood there, revolver in hand.

"Hands up, you rascals! I've got the drop on you," he cried.

The leader sprang up, while the other two started back. They were taken by surprise and at a disadvantage. If they had been armed Tom might have got hurt. As it was he seemed to be master of the situation. The leader, however, was a quick thinker. He flung the hammer at Tom with a quick, underhand swing, and the implement hit the revolver and confused the boy.

"Quick!" cried the leader. "Skip!"

The bunch rushed at Tom, swept him aside, and one tried to disarm him. The boy fired, and he fell with a cry. The others did not stop, but rushing along the passage, reached the front door and ran down the deserted street, disappearing around the corner of William. Tom released Harry, and they looked at the wounded man. He was not seriously hurt, but the ball had broken his collar bone, and he was suffering much pain. When the police arrived Harry told his story and made a charge of attempted robbery against the

captured crook. He was marched off to the nearest precinct station, his wound attended to, and then locked up. Next day Harry appeared against him in the Tombs Police Court, where he was held pending the capture of his companions. When Harry came to think the matter over he recalled that the crooks had made no attempt to steal anything but the contents of the money-box. That seemed to be the only object of their visit.

Then Harry remembered that the leader said: "I don't want the box, but what's in it. My orders are to break it open and secure the important——"

His words were incomprehensible to the young banker. What did he mean when he said his orders were to break it open and secure something of importance? Who had given him those orders? Somebody who had in some way learned that the box held 500 shares of Idaho Copper stock, which was advancing in price? Harry could not understand how anybody knew what was in the box. His cashier didn't know it, and he was positive that his bookkeeper and junior clerk didn't, either. How could an outsider learn anything about what the box contained? It didn't look reasonable, but it puzzled the young banker just the same. As he didn't find a solution to it, he had to give it up. Old Mr. Prescott was astonished to read in the Sunday morning paper that the bank had been entered by three men, whose purpose was defeated by the fact that Harry's friend, Tom Beaseley, was working overtime in the broker's office next door. The paper reported that nothing had been stolen, which gave the old man a great deal of satisfaction. Harry went over the situation with him on Monday morning, telling him about the strange words used by the leader of the intruders, and how the object of the rascals seemed to be solely the contents of the money-box.

"Well, you don't keep anything of value in that box," said Mr. Prescott; "if you did you wouldn't have it in your closet."

"There are some shares of Idaho Copper in it,"

"Are there? I didn't know you had any stock replied Harry.

of your own in the office. Your father didn't speculate in the market, so—however, this is not my business. Maybe it belongs to a customer. In any case, you ought to take it to our safe deposit box and lock it up."

"I will do so this morning. I thought it was safe enough in the money-box, for burglarious attempts are rare in Wall Street."

During the next ten days Idaho Copper went up by degrees to \$15.25 a share. Harry consulted with Tom about the advisability of selling at that figure, and his friend told him he had better, for he didn't think it would go up much higher. So the young banker went around to the little bank and ordered his stock sold. As the market was lively, and the demand for Idaho Copper active, the bank's Curb representative had no trouble in selling the 500 shares right away in lots of 100. Two days later Harry got his statement of account, and his profit footed up \$5,000. That made him feel mighty good. He called on the money-lender, redeemed his securities, and replaced them in his safe deposit box. He had the satisfaction of feeling that he had relieved the old bookkeeper of any worry he might have ex-

perienced had he known the risk his protege had taken in the mining market.

His success with Idaho Copper turned Harry's mind toward making money out of stocks in general. Having \$5,000 to operate with, which was independent of the bank's resources, he felt he could afford to take a chance, and he need say nothing about it at all to the old man, whom he knew would not approve of such a course. During this time, though the police hunted for the other two men implicated in the outrage at the bank, they were not caught, although both Harry and Tom had furnished a good description of them. The prisoner was released on bail furnished by Lawyer Simpson, the legal adviser of the Rev. Mr. Sleek, and later the Grand Jury handed down an indictment against him. Just when he would be tried rested with the public prosecutor.

The money-box, which figured in the case, was used for various purposes by the young banker at his office, but he kept nothing of any great value in it. Most of the time it rested on the top of his desk. Harry didn't expect any further effort would be made to steal it, for he did not regard it as worth carrying off. But that was because he was ignorant of the secret connected with it. Had he had an inkling of it he wouldn't have handled it so carelessly. He merely regarded it with a sentimental interest because it had been the property of his father, and also because it was handy to hold things. One morning he was rather surprised to receive a visit from Mr. Sleek. The reverend gentleman was shown into his private office, and expressed great pleasure at seeing the boy again. As he spoke his sharp eyes wandered about the little office, and they rested for a moment on the money-box.

"How are you getting on, my young friend?" said the head of the Hottentot Missionary Society.

"First rate, Mr. Sleek. I am making a living, and am very well satisfied with the general outlook," replied Harry.

"I am delighted to hear it. Really, I feel a sort of personal interest in you after the generosity I have experienced—I refer to the society—at the hands of your respected father," said Mr. Sleek, beaming on the young banker.

Harry rather doubted the sincerity of the reverend gentleman's statement, but for politeness' sake he thanked him.

"I hope you will come up and dine with me on Sunday," said Mr. Sleek. "We ought not to be strangers to each other."

"Thank you for the invitation, but my time is pretty well taken up on Sunday, and I don't think I could accept."

Mr. Sleek protested, but he did not press the matter very hard. After some talk about the Hottentots, Harry asked him when he was going back to South Africa.

"I can't say, my young friend," he replied. "My stay in this city is rather indefinite, as I have a great deal of business to attend to in the society's interests. I am making regular shipments of supplies to Cape Town, which are forwarded from there to the capital of the Hottentot country, where they are distributed to the various villages by our agent. Each village has its own resident missionary, who looks after the spiritual and temporary welfare of the natives under his

charge. It is a great work, young man, and our reward will come hereafter."

Mr. Sleek rolled his eyes upward, as if to indicate the direction whence he looked for that reward to come. Then his eyes rested again on the money-box.

"My young friend," he said, "have you any special use for that money-box I let you have to take your things away in?"

"You mean that box?" said Harry, in some surprise.

"I do. I could use it to great advantage at present. I will give you \$5 for it."

The reverend gentleman's offer was a further surprise to him.

"Why, you can buy a new box exactly the size of that for half the money at any first-class stationery store," he said. "That box has been damaged a bit since I brought it here."

"I don't mind if it is not in the best of order," said Mr. Sleek, ignoring the question of cost. "I will take it just as it is."

Harry wondered why his visitor preferred that box to a new one, and still more why he was willing to pay twice what it was worth. Clearly the reverend gentleman had some special reason. Whether he had or not, the young banker did not care to sell his father's money-box for any price, and he told the gentleman so. Mr. Sleek looked disappointed, and showed it.

"Couldn't you loan it to me for a day or two?" he asked.

The gentleman's insistence made Harry suspicious. He said that it wouldn't be convenient to loan it, much as he would like to oblige the reverend gentleman. The gentleman looked much put out, and having nothing further to say, he got up, bowed stiffly to the boy and took his leave.

CHAPTE VI.—The Money-box Is Still An Object of Interest.

Mr. Sleek's pronounced desire to get hold of the money-box set Harry thinking. The more he thought over the interview the more it struck him that the reverend gentleman's visit was entirely connected with the money-box. Why? He could not imagine even in the remotest degree. The box had been entirely empty when the clergyman handed it to him and said he might have it. Consequently Mr. Sleek's eagerness to recover it could not be on account of anything of value carried off in the box. Simply as an empty money-box it could have no value to him. The gentleman's desire to obtain it was, therefore, a great mystery to Harry. He took the box down, dumped everything out of it, and looked it over, but the inspection gave him no clue. After returning it to the top of the desk he remembered the effort made by the presumed crooks to break it open, and the leader's words that he had orders to secure something valuable the box was supposed to hold. Burglars don't generally act on other people's orders, but on their own plans. Altogether it seemed as if something most peculiar surrounded the money-box. He called the old cashier in and told him the particulars of Mr. Sleek's visit.

"There is no doubt in my mind that he came

purposefully to get that box," said Harry. "It interests him a whole lot more than it should, and I can't figure out the reason to save my life."

"I don't see that there is any reason why you should worry about it," said the cashier. "The box is yours and he can't get it unless you choose to let him have it. As you say it was entirely empty when he gave it to you, there can't be any pressing reason why he should want it back."

"Whether there is or not, he is not going to get it back," said the boy.

That settled the matter for the time being, and the old man returned to the little counting-room. A week passed, and then Tom Beaseley handed Harry a gilt-edge tip on A. & C. railroad stock. This stock had been depreciated below its normal value by a steady bear effort, continued at intervals over a space of some weeks. Tom told his friend that a big syndicate had been raiding it in order to frighten small holders into selling, and every share that came out the combine gobbled up. The object of the syndicate was to corner enough shares to enable the members of it to control the market, and enable them to boost the price up fifteen or twenty shares, when they intended unloading the stock on the public, because the lambs always showed an eagerness to buy a rising stock, and in their eagerness they did not notice that it soared higher than was safe for them to buy at.

This and much more Tom told Harry, and the result was the young banker felt here was another chance for him to make a haul. So he went around to the little bank and ordered the purchase of \$500 shares for his account at 90, the market price, on a ten per cent. margin. A week later the price went up two points. That of itself represented a perspective profit of \$1,000 to Harry. While he was out at lunch one day a man entered the bank. He had been hovering around the door for half an hour. A rush of customers engaging the attention of the cashier and junior clerk seemed to bring the man in. He slipped past the people at the counter and made for the private office. Opening the door of the partition, he looked in.

The moment seemed favorable for whatever purpose he had in view. He slipped over to the door of the small office and entered. A moment or two later he came out with the money-box in his hand, and made his escape into the entry or corridor of the bank. No one had noticed him, and he started for the door. At that moment Harry came back, unexpectedly, for something he had forgotten. He saw the man, and would have passed him, but he saw that he had his father's money-box in his hand. That was enough for the young banker. He grabbed the man by the arm with one hand and seized the box with the other.

A struggle took place between them. Naturally it attracted attention. The intruder saw the game was up, so he abandoned the box, struck Harry in the face, and ran out of the bank. Pursuit would have been useless, for the man lost himself in the crowd of people passing up and down the street. He was not followed, however. Harry was not a little staggered at this third attempt to get the money-box from him, and he could not help associating it with Mr. Sleek. He also felt satisfied that the first attempt was incited by the reverend gentleman, too. There was

certainly some mystery about the box that he couldn't fathom. He had another talk with the cashier, and after that a place was made in the safe for the box to rest.

"I'd give a whole lot to know why Mr. Sleek is so anxious to get hold of that money-box," he thought, as he started once more for lunch. "There is a reason, of course, but it's beyond me."

That afternoon he went over the matter again with Tom.

"You'd better give the box another and closer examination," said his friend. "Maybe it's got a false bottom, and there is something valuable hidden there that Mr. Sleek has got wind of."

"I don't believe that it's got a false bottom," said Harry. "It is just an ordinary money-box."

"But one of the three men that Saturday afternoon tried to break it open with a hammer. Where did he strike it?"

"He dented the cover along the edge as if trying to open it."

"Then he didn't work at the bottom of it?"

"No."

"Then it gets my goat. If I were you I'd lock the box up in your safe, or if you haven't room I'd leave it at your safe deposit vault. That will prevent the party who wants it from making a fourth and perhaps successful attempt to get it."

"It's locked up in my safe now," said Harry, and that ended their talk about the money-box that day.

Several days passed, during which A. & C. went up to 96. Naturally that made Harry feel good. As he had no occasion to use the contents of the money-box, he did not go near it, and so it remained inside the big office safe. It was safe enough there. A fourth attempt, however, was made to get it. When the junior clerk opened up one morning he found the private room in some disorder. Everything had been ransacked.

The packages in the closet were scattered about on the floor. The desk was broken open and the two big drawers at the bottom pulled out. Apparently nothing had been taken away. Anyway, the thief or thieves found nothing worth carrying off. When Harry turned up and saw what had happened, he knew that it was another case of the money-box. The persistent efforts made to secure it astonished him. He would have put the matter in the hands of the police if he had figured it would do any good. The office was put to rights again, and the young banker guessed that the bank wouldn't be bothered again, as the thief had satisfied himself that the money-box was not there.

"I guess Mr. Sleek will give the matter up now, if he is at the bottom of it," he thought. "He's a fine clergyman to engage in such business. I'll bet he's a fake. Poor father! How deceived he was in this Hottentot missionary! It is always the fine, generous spirited men who fall for the smooth yarns that men like Mr. Sleek know how well to get off with studied effect. I'm afraid father was awfully easy when approached by a slick schemer. It was fortunate that he did not run up against many of them."

Harry felt that the reverend gentleman ought to be exposed. It would take time and trouble to do this, and he did not think it was worth the trouble, since even the exposure of the missionary would not get his father's property back, for un-

less fraud could be proved definitely, the deed of transfer would hold water. Many a swindler had worked a similar trick and got away with it. While Harry was thinking about the Rev. Mr. Sleek, that personage was thinking about him. Or maybe his thoughts were more directly connected with the money-box, since that article appeared to interest him a great deal more than one would have thought. However, he couldn't very well think of the money-box without combining the young banker with it, since it was in the boy's possession. We may as well admit right here that he wanted the box badly.

What his reasons were we won't say, but they were strong enough to force him to go to considerable lengths to get it. He had made one unsuccessful attempt himself, and was responsible for the other three which had been pulled off through the aid of Spencer, the red-headed law clerk. Mr. Sleek couldn't have engineered the matter without Spencer's help. Only men with a leaning toward crooked ways would have taken a hand in the game to carry off the money-box from a Wall Street office. And they had to be pretty slick rascals at that, for Wall Street is well protected against the crooked fraternity. Although Mr. Sleek's own methods were not above question—indeed, the scheme by which he obtained the signature of a dead man to an important paper was absolutely criminal—yet he had no acquaintance among crooks, and knew not how to approach such people. Spencer, however, had quite an extensive acquaintance among the gentry whose faces are familiar to the rogues' gallery. He was a rogue himself at heart, but was not smart enough to be a full-fledged crook. Spencer found the men who were willing to take chances if paid for it. Mr. Sleek was willing to pay to get the money-box. Hence the three attempts on Harry's office. Their failure to produce results caused the clerical gentleman to lose confidence in the vaunted ability of crooks to pull off a job of any importance.

Though the last attempt would have been successful had the money-box been within grasping distance, the fact that Harry no longer kept it in his office told Mr. Sleek that it would be a waste of energy and good money to try again in that quarter. Its removal to some secure resting place gave the reverend gentleman a fit. What was he to do now? He put the question to Spencer, and that young man answered it. He told Mr. Sleek what he would do if he were in his place. The clergyman thought it over and told Spencer to go ahead. And Spencer went ahead, as we shall show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.—Abducted.

A. & C. reached par ten days after Harry bought it.

"Do you think it will go higher?" he asked Tom Beasley.

"All the indications point in that direction," replied his friend.

"Then you would advise me to hold on?"

"I would. I have 50 shares myself, on which all my money is up, and I intend to hold on for 105."

So Harry made no attempt to sell, and next day

the stock went to 103. He held another consultation with Tom. His friend showed him the previous day's stock report.

"The lambs are biting like a shoal of hungry fish," he said. "It is safe to hold on until to-morrow, at any rate."

"But the bottom might fall out of it at any moment," said Harry.

"That's true, but I'm going to risk it. You can use your own judgment."

As the price was then close to 104, the young banker decided to take a chance. He dropped in at the little bank at half-past two and saw that A. & C. was quoted on the blackboard at 105 and a fraction. He figured that he could make \$12,500 by selling then.

"I guess I'll sell," he thought. "A bird in the hand is worth several in the bush."

So he put in his selling order, and in fifteen minutes the little bank had disposed of his shares. Although the outlook indicated that A. & C. would go higher, for there was a large demand for it by the outsiders, on the whole he felt relieved to be on the safe side. The market was liable to break at any time, and he did not want to have that thought on his mind. When he reached his office he called Tom up on their private wire and told him he had sold at 105 3-8.

"I guess you have done right in getting out from under," said his friend. "I haven't sold myself, but I guess I will to-morrow."

Harry didn't know that he was shadowed to his lodgings that afternoon by a smooth-faced young man who had been watching the bank door for half an hour. When he went out after dinner he was followed by another young fellow who had been camping on the opposite side of the street. The young banker went to a public library in his neighborhood and remained there till it closed. On his way home he passed up a side street, as he had frequently done before. A night-hawk cab kept pace with him, but he paid no attention to it. Finally it drove ahead a bit and stopped in front of one of the houses. The man seated beside the driver got down, opened the door, and another man stepped out. They crossed the sidewalk toward the stoop steps of the house. Their movements indicated that they were going there. They stopped a moment, and one began rummaging his pockets.

There was nothing suspicious about their movements as Harry passed them. In another moment he received a blow from a blackjack that sent him stumbling forward. The crack laid him out senseless. The two men laid hold of him and put him into the cab. One got in with him, while the other resumed his seat beside the driver. Then the shabby vehicle wheeled around again and was driven down the street at a quick pace. At the corner of a wretched alley, in one of the dirtiest streets branching from the river in the town of Hoboken, stood a dilapidated building that fitted in well with its surroundings. The ground floor was occupied by a saloon which bore a certain brewer's sign above the wide double door and equally wide window. Forming part of the sign was the name of the proprietor of the ginmill in fair-sized letters. When the sign was originally put up it looked clean and was resplendent with gilt. Since then the weather and the flying dirt of the neighborhood had converted it into a dingy

hue, in keeping with the house itself. The man who ran the saloon was an Englishman of doubtful morals. He had run a public house for years previously in filthy Ratcliff Highway, London, under the name of the "Black Boy." When he opened up in Hoboken he put that name over the door, thus following a custom he was used to, although not followed on this side of the water.

Having taken the entire building, he fitted the upper part out as a cheap hotel, entrance to which was had by the side door. Over this door hung a red lamp, and the words "Black Boy Hotel" were painted in black on three sides of it. On the whole, the name was appropriate, since the building was black with age and dirt, though it was no blacker nor dirtier than its neighbors, or the street itself, which had a black reputation with the police. It was a busy thoroughfare during the daytime, because it led directly from the docks, where foreign steamships and other vessels were moored at big wharves, taking aboard and discharging their cargoes. As the street was not kept clean, possibly for fear such a thing would shock the sensibilities of the dwellers, and put to shame the buildings, a rainy day produced a thick veneering of mud which the horses and wagon wheels of passing vehicles scattered to the right and left with fine impartiality. The windows and woodwork of the "Black Boy" saloon got their share of the sprinkling, and helped make the boy blacker than ever. The windows of the saloon was curtained with red stuff, which time, the sun, the smoke, and the summer flies, had converted to a dingy orange with black specks. The proprietor of the "Black Boy" did a roaring trade.

His name was Christopher Ketch, and he claimed distant kinship with Jack Ketch, a notorious London hangman of the previous century. He was an ex-prizefighter, and the dirty walls of his saloon were placarded with numerous chromos of fistic characters and prize-ring events. The bulk of Ketch's customers bore a shady reputation, and some of them were guilty of deeds as black as the house. When a crook, suspected to be in Hoboken, was wanted by the police, the detectives went to the "Black Boy" saloon first in an effort to pounce upon him. If they didn't find him there it was probably due to the fact that he got the tip in time to clear out by the underground passages that ran from the cellar in several directions. These passages were known to the authorities, but their outlets could not always be traced. But for the fact that Ketch had a big pull with certain politicians, who could count on his services at elections, these underground burrows would have been largely done away with, because they handicapped the police. As it was, the detectives had to do the best they could when orders carried them to the "Black Boy." It was before this delectable place that the night-hawk cab, carrying the insensible young banker, drew up after crossing the river by ferryboat. The young man who had ridden with the driver got down and entered the saloon. Ketch and a young barkeeper were behind the bar dispensing liquid nourishment to a crowd of customers, whose faces looked hard, and whose eyes had acquired the habit of being always on the move to avoid being approached by any one unawares. The newcomer went to the inner end of the bar and called Ketch over.

"The boy is here," he said.

"The boy!" said Ketch, for the moment forgetful of the arrangement he had made with Harry's abductors.

"The young banker of Wall Street we want taken care of. You've received \$100 on account."

"I twig," replied Ketch. "'Is room is ready. I'll call my boy Nicky to show you upstairs. Is the bloomin' cove doped all right?"

"He's unconscious."

"Right. I don't want no more hevidence agin me than I kin 'elp. You understand?"

"Sure. He's dead to the world, so there isn't any danger of his learning where he's been brought."

Ketch pushed a button in the wall, and Nicky Needles responded. Needles wasn't the boy's right name, but he was such a sharp youth that he had been called as sharp as a needle, and so by degrees he came to be nicknamed Needles, and he had got accustomed to it, and preferred it to his own, which was plain Smith. Ketch said something to Needles, whereat the lad nodded and told the visitor he was at his disposal.

"You'll fetch 'im in at the 'otel door," said the proprietor. "Nicky'll meet you there and take you upstairs. Heverythin' is arranged for the pris'ner's reception, and I'll hawnsers for 'im stayin' there as long as you come across with the price, pervided the 'ouse hain't pulled. I always get word in hadvance of hanythin' like that, in which case 'e'll 'ave to be put in the well to get 'im hout of the way. You see I cawn't take hany chawnces with the perlice. They're sore on me 'cause I give 'em so much trouble, and bein' perlected, it's 'ard for 'em to hact. Of course, I take my 'at off to 'em, but my perliteness is lost on 'em, 'cause why? They call it a bluff. What they wouldn't do to me if they could is 'ardly worth mentionin'."

Ketch returned to his business of dispensing liquor, while the young man returned to the cab. He opened the door and spoke to his companion. In a few minutes Nicky appeared at the side door with a smoky lamp in his hand. That was the signal for the removal of the prisoner from the cab to the hotel end of the house. The young banker was carried up a succession of dirty stairs to a room on the fourth floor or top of the building. It was a small room, very much out of repair. A large patch of the ceiling had fallen out, leaving the slats exposed, but such a little thing as that never concerned the proprietor. The paper on the walls was missing in spots, but that was to be expected. There was an iron cot with a straw mattress and a pair of army blankets carrying an odor of their own. There was an iron washstand with a metal bowl and pitcher, the finish of which had been largely rubbed on. There was a cracked looking-glass, with a shelf under it upon which rested a dirty comb and brush. They didn't look worth stealing, but nevertheless they were secured by small German silver chains. There was a chair and a piece of frayed carpet on the floor. That covered the furnishing of the room, and it was upon this charming combination of antiques that Harry opened his eyes some hours later, when the early sunshine was struggling for entrance through the broken slats of the window shutters, both of which were securely nailed to prevent them from falling into the dirty and narrow yard below.

CHAPTER VIII.—Harry Learns Why He Is A Prisoner.

Harry sat up on the cot and looked around the miserable room in the greatest astonishment. For a moment he did not recall what had happened to him on the side street in Manhattan.

"Am I dreaming or what?" he asked himself.

It was a natural question for him to put to himself under the circumstances. Then his hand instinctively went to a very sore spot on the side of his head where the blackjack had laid him out. His scattered thoughts began to shape themselves, and memory reasserted itself.

"I recollect now being hit by something hard on my way home," he mused. "No one was near me but those two men who got off the cab. They must have attacked me from behind. What was their object? Robbery, I suppose."

Harry felt in his pockets and found he had been cleaned out of the few dollars he had and his watch and chain.

"They got away with what I had, but why was I brought to this room? It's a cheap skate of a place, like a very common tenement. No such building is around the neighborhood where I was struck down. I can't understand it."

He got up and went to the door. When he tried the handle he found the door was locked.

"Am I a prisoner?" he ejaculated. "If so, why?"

He opened the window and peered out through the broken slats. He could easily see a succession of roofs and windows belonging to buildings of a low tenement order. Then he caught sight of the river, which was only two blocks away, and across the river he could see a vista of Greater New York. His first impression was that he was looking on the East River, with Brooklyn or its suburbs beyond. The width of the river convinced him that such an idea was wrong. After a careful inspection he hit the truth—that it was the Hudson. Then he had been carried way over to New Jersey. That deepened the mystery of his predicament.

"I'd like to know the meaning of all this?" he said. "Am I in Jersey City, Hoboken, Weehawken, or where? There is something very strange in this."

An hour passed, and then he heard the shooting of a bolt outside the door. Then the key turned in the lock, and the door opened. A hard-looking man stood there with a short club in his hand. Harry looked at him, and was about to demand an explanation when a boy—Nicky Needles—walked in with a restaurant tray on which were rare dishes and a cup of smoking coffee. The dishes contained a piece of cheap steak, some fried potatoes, hash house style, some bread and butter, and a fat pickle.

"Here's your breakfast," said Needles, laying the tray on the cot. "I'll be back for the dishes after a while. Eat hearty."

"Hold on," cried Harry, as the boy turned to go.

"What you want?" asked Needles.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"The meanin' of wot?"

"My being a prisoner here?"

"Dunno nothin' about it. Yer friends brought you here last night."

"My friends!" cried the young banker.

"To be boarded and lodged till further notice."

"But there is some mistake."

"Dat ain't my business. Make yer kick to the proper party when he comes."

"I want to know why I have been brought here."

"Don't know nothin' about it. I didn't bring yer. Dat's all I know."

Nicky walked out, the door was shut and secured again, and once more the boy was alone, if anything more astonished than ever. It was clear he had been brought to the house for some unexplained purpose. He was to be boarded and lodged in that rookery till further notice. He couldn't make head or tail of the matter. He looked at the food. It wasn't very inviting, but if he didn't eat he would probably go hungry. As he had a healthy appetite, he decided to avail himself of it. The steak was tough, the potatoes watery, the butter poor, and the coffee muddy, but he made a meal and felt better. Then he sat down to await the next scene in the drama of which he was the victim. The sun rose slowly, and he heard the hum of traffic in the air. Slatternly women appeared at the windows of the tenements, hung out washing and talked to one another from their windows. He heard sounds in the house, but none near his room. Time hung heavily on his hands as the day advanced.

"Mr. Prescott will wonder at my absence from the office," he thought. "Maybe he'll send a note to my landlady to learn if I'm sick. If he does he will find out that I was not at home all night, and did not appear at breakfast. Then he'll wonder where I went, and why I haven't telephoned down to him."

Needles turned up and took the tray away, but was as dumb as an oyster. Noon came, and soon after the boy brought up his dinner on a tray. He was always accompanied by a man with the club. Harry made no attempt to escape, for the club was significant of what would happen to him if he tried. He ate the dinner, which consisted of roast beef, boiled potatoes, bread and butter, coffee and a big pickel. He was not partial to pickels, and it went back as it came. That afternoon wore wearily away. About five o'clock the door opened again, and two men came in. One was Spencer, the law clerk, elaborately disguised.

"How are you feeling?" asked Spencer, with a grin.

"Are you the people who are responsible for my being here?" asked the young banker.

"I am," replied the clerk.

"Then I should like an explanation."

"You shall have it. You have no suspicion why you are here?"

"None whatever."

"You were brought here to be ransomed."

"Then you know I'm in the banking business in Wall Street, and your object is to extort money from me."

"No, I don't want your money."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You have in your possession a certain japanned money-box. Hand that over through a note addressed to your cashier, and then you will be set at liberty."

"So you are after that money-box?" Harry said.

"I am."

"Who are you acting for?"

"Myself."

"I don't believe it. Of what use is an empty money-box to you that you should go to such lengths to get it?"

"That is my business."

"Look here, it is a clergyman by the name of Sleek who wants that box."

Spencer gave a start, and then denied it.

"Your denial amounts to nothing with me," said Harry. "Mr. Sleek called on me at my office and tried his best to persuade me to let him have it. Two persons are not likely to be actuated by the same object, so I am satisfied you are acting for Sleek. I referred to him as a clergyman. That is what he professes to be, but such acts as he is guilty of stamps him as a fraud. I am fully satisfied that in obtaining my father's property he used methods that no minister would adopt. If he really is a clergyman, he is a disgrace to his cloth."

"You are entirely wrong, young man," insisted Spencer. "I want the box."

"Why do you want it?"

"I have my reasons."

"Well, you won't get that box from me. It isn't worth two dollars, intrinsically speaking, but it belonged to my father, and I wouldn't sell it for \$1,000."

"You would prefer to stay here cooped up for an indefinite time?"

"My cashier will put the case in the hands of the police as soon as he feels that something has happened to me."

"What of it?"

"A search will be made for me."

"Do you know where you are?"

"Apparently in New Jersey."

"You have guessed it. You will not be found here by the New York police."

"Don't be too sure of that."

"Very well. You won't see me again for two or three days. By that time I guess you will have changed your mind."

"You'll have another guess coming."

"All right. You'll stay here till you give in," said Spencer, turning toward the door.

Harry made no reply. As the two men walked out the young banker caught a glimpse of the man with the club outside. Then the door was secured, and he heard the retreating footsteps of the three echoing along the uncarpeted corridor.

Harry gave himself up to thought. He saw that there was some mystery connected with the money-box, and he decided that he would examine that article at the first opportunity after he got out of his present fix. Then he made up his mind to try to escape. He went to the one window and pulled the slats out of the shutter, which was nailed fast. Then tearing the two blankets up into strips, he knotted them together and tied one end fast to the bedstead. Letting himself through the hole in the shutter and hanging onto the improvised rope, he lowered himself to the window beneath his own. This he found to be unlocked, and raising it he entered the room, which was empty.

Harry then opened the door of the room and saw the stairs leading to the street. Hearing no noise except men talking in the barroom, as he thought it was, he softly made his way down the

stairs and out into the street. It did not take him long to determine his way to the nearest ferry, and so to his lodgings, where he turned in and slept till morning.

CHAPTER IX.—What Harry Learns In the Saloon.

He reached the bank early, and when Mr. Prescott came in a few minutes later, he called him into his private room.

"Where were you yesterday, Harry?" asked the old man. "I sent a messenger to your house, and the landlady returned word that you were out all night and had not yet returned."

"You'd never guess. I was a prisoner——"

"A prisoner!" interrupted the cashier, in great astonishment.

"Yes, over in a filthy tenement in Hoboken."

"You amaze me. How did it happen?"

"I will tell you," and the boy at once put Mr. Prescott in possession of all the facts.

"And the object of the rascals was to get hold of that money-box?"

"That's what it was. They were working for Mr. Sleek."

"The sanctimonious old rascal!" cried the cashier. "There is certainly some mystery about that box. I think if I were you I'd knock it apart and see if anything is hidden in it."

"My father wasn't a man to adopt secretive measures. Why should he have hidden anything of value in his money-box?"

"He may have had reasons for doing so."

"But unless he left some word of what he had done, how would any one know about it?"

"He must have left a writing which Mr. Sleek found among his papers after he had given you the box. That would account for his eagerness to get it back."

"True. If anything is hidden in the box it must be a paper of some kind. It could not have been his will, for that would cut no ice with Mr. Sleek. By transferring all his property to the clergyman before he died, nothing was left to be conveyed by a will. The surest way a man can dispose of property, so as to block a possible contest on the part of interested parties, is to hand it over to somebody, or some institution, before you die. Unless it can be shown that the transfer was secured by fraud, it will stand in law, so I have been told."

"I have no idea what might be hidden in the money-box," said the cashier. "Your father did not confide his personal matters to me."

"I shall follow your suggestion and knock the box apart to see if I can find a solution to the mystery. First, however, I intend to put this case in the hands of a private detective agency. A clever sleuth might get to the bottom of Mr. Sleek's anxiety to get possession of the box."

"That's a good idea. It will cost you something, though."

"I know; but if I secure results it will pay. Besides, I would like very much to find out the identity of the men that the reverend gentleman is operating through. Indications point to them being crooks. Rather strange company for a clergyman to hobnob with. We might find out that Mr. Sleek is a master crook himself, and is merely

sailing under false colors. Honestly, I think that Hottentot Missionary Society is a pure fake. I should have investigated it. A letter to the authorities at Cape Town, South Africa, might have pricked the bubble."

"Or an interview with the heads of some of the missionary societies of this city might lead to developments."

"I shall make it my business to look into the matter right away. If Mr. Sleek is the fraud I believe him to be, he ought to be shown up."

"He ought to be arrested and punished, I should say."

"Well, that is all now, Mr. Prescott. I will call at a detective agency to-day."

This Harry did after going to his lunch. He told everything to the chief of the agency and asked his advice.

"It's rather a singular case," said the chief. "As the money-box is in your possession, why don't you go into it thoroughly. Doubtless if you pull it apart you will find a solution of the mystery."

"I intend to."

"You say that this Mr. Sleek secured all of your father's property by deed of gift for the benefit of the missionary society, of which he claims to be the head?"

"Yes, sir. My father, believing me to have been lost at sea, and having no other relative he was interested in, allowed himself to be imposed upon by the reverend gentleman's wheedling tongue. I want you to investigate Mr. Sleek, and find out whether he is a real minister or a fraud. His actions certainly do not speak well for his sanctity."

"Apparently not from your statement of the case," said the chief dryly. "Very well, I will take the case, and advise you from time to time of the progress I make in it. You said when Mr. Sleek turned the banking business over to you, which was probably a sop to keep you from contesting the legality of the deed of gift, that he took you to his lawyer's."

"Yes."

"Give me the name and address of this legal gentleman."

Harry furnished it.

"That will be all for the present," and the young banker left the detective agency.

That afternoon Harry got in touch with the stock market again. A broker friend told him that S. & T. was a good stock to get next to, as it would surely rise shortly.

"How do you know it's going to rise soon?" asked Harry.

"Will you keep the matter quiet if I tell you?" asked the trader.

Harry promised he would. Then the broker produced a letter from his pocket and let the young banker read it. It was from an official of the company—a relative of the broker's—and it told the trader if he got in on S. & T. right away he would double his money. He said the rise would come about within a week, and he guaranteed it would not be less than ten points. The broker told Harry that the information could be depended on. The young banker thought the matter over, and before three o'clock he went around to the little bank and bought 1,000 shares at 85. Then he passed the tip on to his friend Tom.

That evening after supper Harry went up to Harlem and strolled past the house which once belonged to his father, and would have been his but for the strategy of the Rev. Mr. Sleek.

What he expected to find out he could hardly have explained. He was opposite the house when the front door opened and a young man came out, ran down the steps and started for Seventh avenue. Harry saw the man's face in the gas-lamp, and recognized him as Lawyer Simpson's clerk. In some way the clerk put him in mind of the bearded young man who visited him in the "Black Boy" hotel in Hoboken. He decided to follow him. The clerk, after turning into the avenue, walked to One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street. He entered a saloon on that street, passed the bar and went into a room beyond. A couple of pool tables were in this room, and both were in use.

The clerk was not here, and Harry figured that he must have entered a passage beyond. He crossed over and entered it himself. He discovered four card rooms opening off the passage. They were equipped with heavy red draperies, divided in the middle, instead of doors. When the rooms were not occupied the draperies were looped up on either side of the opening. Three of the rooms were dark with the draperies up. The fourth had the drapery down, and an electric bulb shone behind it. The murmur of voices came from within the little compartment. Harry judged that the lawyer's clerk had come there to meet an acquaintance, probably to play cards, and on the chance that he might learn something that would interest him, he popped into the adjoining room and dropped the draperies to conceal his presence.

He would have been disappointed in his expectation of hearing anything through the dividing partition but for the fact that the board nearest the wall was warped, and this left a narrow slit through which a ray of light shone. Harry placed his head against the board and his ear to the slit. That enabled him to hear all that passed in the adjacent compartment.

"Well, what did Sleek say when you told him that the prisoner had escaped from the place you and Benson took him to?" said a voice that sounded something like Lawyer Simpson's.

"He was mad," replied the clerk. "He said this was the fourth failure I had made, and he guessed there wasn't any use of making another attempt."

"Is he going to throw up his hands?"

"No, I don't think he is, but he's sore on me."

"Then I think we might tackle the matter independent of him. There is evidently something of great value in that money-box to induce him to make such persistent efforts to get hold of it. If we can get hold of the box ourselves, I think it would pay us. We could then make our own terms with him."

"I was thinking of that myself. Anyway, I've got him under my thumb."

"You mean with regard to the trust gift?"

"Yes."

"But you couldn't blow on him without incriminating yourself."

"I know it, blame the luck! And he knows it, too, that's why he treats me the way he does. He doesn't seem a bit afraid of me turning on him."

"You have tried to pull his leg, and he wouldn't have it, is that so?"

"Yes, that's so."

"You then threatened him, and he laughed at you?"

"That's about the size of it. I'm sorry I went into the thing. I expected to make a lot more out of him, but the scheme hasn't worked."

The other man chuckled.

"Well, never mind," he said. "Let us try and get that money-box ourselves, and maybe your share of what's in it will make you feel better."

"Maybe it will and maybe it won't. The box might hold only a paper which would be of no use to any one but Sleek."

"That's all right. We'll sell it to him for the best price we can get."

"We'll have a time of it driving a bargain with him. He's as sleek as his name. He's more of a crook than he is a minister. I don't take any stock in that Hottentot society he makes such a bluff about. It's just a confidence game to bleed people with."

"That's my idea. The woods are full of people who are living by their wits."

"And most of them would make more money by doing an honest day's work."

"You're right there. Sleek is a shrewd and capable man. I'll bet he could earn ten thousand a year getting business for some large concern. Big business is looking for just such men—they are needed. But he isn't built that way. He'd rather work the public in his own way. Well, he certainly worked Banker Hazel in great shape."

The two men, having finished their talk, left the card-room, went to the bar and took a drink, and then left the saloon. Harry followed them out and let them go their way. He had learned something, but whether it would be of any use to him he could not say.

CHAPTER X.—Harry Makes His Third Coup in the Stock Market.

Next morning he told the old cashier what he had overheard at the interview between the lawyer's clerk and Lawyer Simpson, his employer, in the card-room at the back of the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street saloon.

"The lawyer is evidently no better than he ought to be," said the old man. "No respectable legal gentleman would hold such an interview with his clerk, whose talk proves him to be a rascal; nor would a reputable lawyer do business with a man of Mr. Sleek's stamp after he came to know him as well as this lawyer appears to know the reverend gentleman."

"That's right," nodded Harry. "The whole bunch is tarred with the same brush. Birds of a feather, so to speak. It wouldn't surprise me to learn that my father was the victim of a put-up job. I'll bet Mr. Sleek wouldn't have turned over this banking business to me if he was sure he could have stood me off in case I brought the case into court."

"I've always looked at it in that light," said Mr. Prescott. "I distrusted that missionary from the day he came here and announced that your dead father had turned over everything he possessed to him in trust for his society. He showed me the deed of gift, however, and though your

father's signature was hardly recognizable, still it was witnessed by what I took to be a competent person—the clerk of the lawyer who drew it up. But now that clerk appears to be a rascal, and the lawyer himself of doubtful respectability, it is a grave question in my mind whether the document is a genuine expression of your late father's wishes. His signature might even have been forged or, what is more probable, forced from him by compulsion. At any rate, it doesn't look at all like his writing."

"You have hit the truth, I guess," said Harry. "The lawyer's clerk, whose name I think is Spencer, told his employer last night that he had Mr. Sleek under his thumb, but that the legal gentleman did not appear to be afraid of him. From that I take it that both of them are equally guilty of some shady transaction—probably the deed of gift—and that neither dare expose the other."

"Yes. The more we delve into the matter the worse it looks. I think you ought to call on a first-class lawyer and lay the case before him with the view of instituting legal proceedings against Mr. Sleek for the recovery of the balance of your father's property, which is greater than the value of this business."

"Your suggestion is worthy of consideration. You must remember, however, that I signed off my rights in Lawyer Simpson's office, and in attacking the genuineness of the deed of gift the burden of proving it a fraud will rest with me."

"I know. But you can subpoena Clerk Spencer as a witness, and on the stand a clever lawyer should be able to make him admit damaging statements if he is guilty of collaborating with Mr. Sleek in a criminal transaction."

"In accounting for the unfamiliar look of my father's signature, Mr. Sleek will assert that he was dying at the time and barely able to write, and Spencer will naturally back him up. I can't attack Spencer's character unless I have evidence to back up my statement. Even if I could show that Mr. Sleek was a fake missionary, and that the society of which he is the alleged head has no existence in fact, I could not shake his grip on my father's property. I must prove fraud, and with that end in view I must wait till I see what the detective agency can discover."

The old cashier agreed with him, and the interview came to an end. Harry was very careful after that when he went out nights, for he was afraid another attempt would be made by the conspirators to get him. He took the money-box from the safe twice with the intention of knocking it apart, but each time the sentimental interest he felt in it deterred him. He figured that he could do it any time, and that whatever important thing the box contained was at his disposal, and there was no chance of Mr. Sleek getting possession of it. During this time S. & T. took an upward jump, going to 90 in a few days. There it stopped for nearly a week, and then it got another upward move on. This time it kept steadily on, and at the end of two weeks reached par, and at that figure Harry sold out, realizing a profit of \$15,000. He now had close to \$30,000 tucked away in his safe deposit box which the old cashier was ignorant of.

"I guess it is time to surprise him," thought the young banker. "That additional capital will make

my business pretty solid. He will be tickled to death over my success in the market, but just the same he won't approve of me continuing to take chances. In fact, unless I get hold of another real good tip, I will keep out of the speculative field. One bad deal could easily clean me out of all I have made if I went in as deep as I have been doing."

At five o'clock that afternoon Harry called the old cashier in to his room.

"I have a confession to make to you, Mr. Prescott," he said with a smile.

"A confession!" ejaculated the old man, looking benignly upon his protege.

"Yes. I have done something in a business way which I have concealed from you."

"Well, well, it's nothing serious, I guess."

"No, but it might have been. Had my first deal turned out wrong I might have lost \$2,500 of my small capital, and then you would have said things to me."

"I could hardly scold you for losing your own money, serious as such a thing might have been to the bank."

"Not if I had lost the money in the stock market?"

The old cashier frowned.

"Did you put \$2,500 into stocks?" he asked anxiously.

"I did."

"And how did you come out?"

"I cleared \$5,000."

The old man's face cleared.

"You were fortunate," he said. "But you took a great risk."

"I heard that copper was going up, and I raised the \$2,500 on my St. Paul securities. I bought Idaho Copper at \$5 and sold it at \$15. After redeeming my stock I was \$5,000 ahead."

"Did you make another deal?"

"I did, later."

"And this time you lost?"

"No. I made \$7,500."

"Is it possible?"

"The day I was abducted I went into my third and last deal," continued the young banker. "I got a tip from a broker I know, and bought 1,000 S. & T."

"You won again?"

"I figure my profit this time at \$15,000. That gives me \$27,500 independent of my capital in the bank."

"My gracious!"

"Now I have about decided to quit."

"You are sensible, and I congratulate you."

"I shall turn the money over to the bank as additional capital, and that will enable us to extend our operations."

"Good!" cried the old man. "You are a smart boy, and I am proud of you. How pleased your father would be if it were possible for him to know of your success."

Harry was glad to get this matter off his mind. He apologized to the old gentleman for going into a speculation which he would not approve of, and Mr. Prescott told him that was all right. The result delighted him, he said, and he saw no reason why his protege should not some day become a big banker.

"This money will enable you to fight Mr. Sleek

for your rights," he said. "When one goes to law he needs the sinews of war at his back."

Harry nodded.

"You haven't pulled the money-box to pieces yet," said the cashier. "Why don't you?"

The young banker explained why he had hesitated.

"Your reasons are all right in their way, but I think under the circumstances you ought to put sentiment aside. Unless Mr. Sleek is under a misapprehension, you will find something of importance."

"I have sounded the box all over for a false bottom and false sides, but there is no indication that such exists. In fact, I am willing to swear that the box is not different from any other money-box. I don't believe there is any mystery about it. In my opinion Mr. Sleek is on a false scent."

Harry shut down his desk, and he and the old man left the bank.

CHAPTER XI.—In the Toils Again.

A few days afterward Harry got his first report from the detective agency. He was informed that Lawyer Simpson had no great standing in the legal fraternity, and was suspected of having had a hand in several shady transactions. He did a considerable business in the police courts defending crooks, and furnishing them with bail. The second part of the report dealt with the law clerk, Spencer, whose first name was Richard. He had been shadowed, and it was found that he patronized sporting resorts of a low grade frequented by many persons whose reputations would not stand the glare of a searchlight. He enjoyed an extensive acquaintance with these individuals, but the regular police had nothing particular against him. The report said that he was being followed up, and the agency hoped to be able to furnish further information concerning him.

The third paragraph dealt with Mr. Sleek. The agency had ascertained that the Hottentot society he claimed affiliation with did not exist. Mr. Sleek was simply a grafter whose peculiar talents enabled him to pose with success as a clergyman. So far as the agency could learn he had been in New York but six months, and had at first made a business of soliciting contributions for the Hottentots. At present he was doing nothing in a business way, and had not since he came in possession of the Hazel property. In conclusion, the report said that the agency was trying to get a line on his career before he came to the city. That was all, and Harry felt that as far as it went it was quite satisfactory. He handed it to the old cashier to read.

"Just what I thought," nodded the cashier. "Follow the matter up and you'll get back the rest of your father's property."

"I hope so," said Harry, "but I have a foxy lot to deal with."

"That can't be helped. One thing I would warn you of, and that is—don't let Mr. Sleek sell the house. He'll do it at a sacrifice if he gets wind of the efforts you are making against him. Once he turns everything into cash he'll disappear, and it won't be easy to find him. He might go to Europe."

Next day Harry called at the detective agency and saw the chief again. He said he was willing to pay the expense of placing the reverend gentleman under constant watch to prevent him from selling the house.

"Very well," replied the chief, "I will have him shadowed right along."

Next day Harry visited all the real estate offices in that part of Harlem, and left word that if the house was offered for sale he should be immediately notified. The agents, believing he had an idea of buying the house, promised to advise him if the place was put on their books. When he got back to the office he found a letter there from Mr. Sleek, inviting him to eat Christmas dinner with him.

"What do you think of that?" he said, showing the letter to Mr. Prescott.

"You will decline the invitation, of course?" said the cashier.

"Sure. I am not going to walk into a trap, as it probably is."

So he wrote Mr. Sleek that a previous engagement prevented him accepting his kind invitation, and mailed it right away. He would have turned down the invitation anyway, because he had arranged to dine with the cashier on Christmas. Mr. Prescott lived out in a modest little house in Flatbush, and thither Harry took his way early Christmas afternoon. The old gentleman was a widower, and lived with his married daughter and her husband, but he owned the house himself. He had also several thousand dollars deposited in a couple of savings banks, and was regarded as the master of the house. Harry spent a jovial Christmas with the family, and remained until close to midnight, when he set out to catch a car for the bridge.

There was a flurry of snow in the air. Just enough fell to whiten the ground and give a real Christmas appearance to the night. Harry was putting his best foot forward, when at the corner of the second block he was suddenly set upon by three young men and knocked out just as on the previous occasion. Then a shrill whistle brought up a cab without lights, the young banker was loaded into it, the men clambered aboard, and the vehicle was driven away. Once more Harry's enemies had him in their power. When the young banker recovered consciousness he found himself lying on a cot with his arms bound to his side. It didn't take him long to understand that he had fallen a victim to those persistent individuals who were after the money-box. He wondered where he had been carried to this time. It was still night, apparently, for the room was dark. He attempted to rise, and then he found that he was also tied to the cot.

"The rascals are making sure this time that I won't be able to make my escape from them," thought Harry. "With detectives watching them, as I supposed, I did not dream they would be able to make another move against me. And now they have me in their power again. This is hard luck."

There was nothing Harry could do except make an effort to free his arms, and this met with failure. Considerable time passed, at least it seemed long to the young banker, and still there was no sign of daylight coming. Then he heard sounds of footsteps overhead. In a few minutes he heard a door open somewhere around, and he saw a flash

of light upon the bare rafters. Somebody was coming, and though he knew it was an enemy, he welcomed any change in the situation. As the light flashed around Harry saw that the walls were composed of stone and were windowless, so he judged that he was confined in a cellar. Then he saw the figure of a man advancing with a lantern in his hand. He was the same party who had visited him in the "Black Boy" hotel in Hoboken. Harry felt pretty sure that it was Spencer, the lawyer's clerk, in disguise. As a matter of fact, it was. The newcomer looked down at his prisoner and grinned.

"You see we've got you again," he said.

"I see you have," replied the boy. "You must have followed me out to Flatbush and then lay in wait for me."

"That's what we did. You're a nervy chap to make such a get-away from the top floor room in Hoboken. If those blankets had given way that would have been the last of you. It is clear that you have got to be watched pretty closely to hold on to you. I don't think you'll get away this time before coming to an agreement with me."

"You can't make an arrangement with me about the turning over of that money-box, not if you keep me here for a year and a day," said Harry.

"I have something different to propose to you."

"I don't care to listen to you."

"This idea will be to your advantage."

"In what way?" asked Harry, curious to learn what the young man was driving at now.

"You haven't learned the secret of the box?"

"Not yet, but I dare say I can any time I choose."

"You take the matter easy."

"I can afford to. I have the box. Mr. Sleek, in whose interests you are working, will never have a chance at it. You can tell him that."

"I am not working for Mr. Sleek now."

"Then you admit that previously you have been?"

"Well, as there is no witness to this interview, I'll admit it."

"He wants the box."

"I guess you know that."

"And you were at the back of the previous attempts made to get it?"

"I was. I got the people to do the jobs, all of which failed."

"I thought so. Now tell me who you are."

"I'd rather not until we come to a definite understanding and I have your guarantee not to prosecute me for anything I have done."

"I hardly think you'll get such a guarantee from me."

"I think I will when I show you it will be to your interest to stand in with me."

"Stand in with you, eh? Then you are thinking of going back on Mr. Sleek?"

"I believe I can make more out of you."

"You are frank about it."

"Yes. I see money in being in with you."

"What is your proposition?"

"Ten thousand dollars cash and your promise not to proceed against me or my partner."

"Who is your partner?"

"Never mind. We'll leave him out of the case. He won't appear in it. The business will be transacted by me. I merely mentioned him be-

cause you might suspect his identity, and I am bound in that case to protect him. It is part of the agreement I have with him. He is to get half of the money."

"Go on."

"Will you agree to that arrangement?"

"I hardly think I will, but if I did, what am I to get for the expenditure of \$10,000, which is a large amount of money?"

"Fifty thousand in property."

"I see. You refer to my late father's property, which Mr. Sleek obtained through that deed of gift—the proportion he retained after turning the banking business over to me as a sop to prevent me making trouble for him?"

"I do."

"I fail to see how you can influence the matter in any way."

"I can do it," said the visitor, in a confident tone. "The \$50,000 includes the secret of the money-box."

"As I intend to pull the box to pieces when I get back to my office, I guess if it holds a secret I will learn it without any assistance from you."

"You can pull the box to pieces, but the chances are you won't learn anything."

"Why not? If I can't learn the mystery, how can you or Mr. Sleek discover it if you had the box?"

"Because we know the secret."

"You must be pretty close to Mr. Sleek."

"I have been, but I intend to cut him out by doing business with you direct."

"How can you do business with me in relation to my father's property when Mr. Sleek controls it through the deed of gift?"

"Because his control of it depends on me."

"You have said enough, my friend," said Harry.

"I have been weighing your words carefully, and the conclusion I have reached agrees with my previous ideas on the subject."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I can see through a millstone when there's a hole in it. The deed of gift, as I have always suspected, is a fraud. My father's signature was either obtained from him by intimidation, as he lay dying, or it was forged after his death. Its validity in law rested wholly on the credibility of the man who witnessed it. That man was you."

"Me!" cried the visitor, starting back.

"Yes. You are Richard Spencer."

CHAPTER XII.—Conclusion.

"How do you know I am Richard Spencer?" asked the young man, after a pause.

"Because Richard Spencer is the only one who can prove that the deed of gift is not a genuine expression of my father's wishes."

"That doesn't prove I am Spencer."

"You just said that Mr. Sleek's control of the property covered by the deed of gift depends on you. That shows you are Spencer. And your statement further shows that you know my father's signature was not honestly obtained. If it was honestly got you couldn't deprive Mr. Sleek of a dollar's worth of the property. You see I am wide awake to the situation."

"Well, will you agree to my proposition if I come over to your side and show that the paper is fraudulent—that the signature was not honestly obtained to it? Will you pay me \$10,000 to recover the property now held by Mr. Sleek, and if I show you how to get \$10,000 more through the money-box? Will you?" said the visitor eagerly.

"Was my father's signature forged?" asked Harry.

"You can't trap me into any admission until you agree to my terms."

"And suppose I refuse your terms?"

"Only a fool would do that. You'll gain \$40,000."

"If my father's signature was forged you are a party to it. Your proposition requires me to protect you. I don't believe I could protect you if I was willing to. The moment you give Mr. Sleek away he will be open to arrest. If arrested he will naturally turn on you. He won't take the whole guilt on his own shoulders. At any rate, he will try to get back at you, and then you will be arrested. Then how will I be able to save you?"

"I'm not worrying about what Sleek will do to me. The moment I get my share of the \$10,000 I'll skip the town."

"And your partner?"

"Sleek can't touch him, because he had nothing to do with the paper except——"

"Draw it up, to Mr. Sleek's order."

"I didn't say that."

"I know you didn't, but I am fully informed of the identity of this partner of yours. He is your employer, Mr. Simpson."

Spencer uttered an ejaculation.

"What makes you think he is?" he said.

"Perhaps you think I've been asleep all this time, Mr. Spencer? I have found out a lot about Lawyer Simpson, and you, too. I have learned where you spend your nights, and the kind of company you keep. I have also learned that Mr. Sleek is not a missionary, and that his Hottentot society does not exist. You are not dealing with a foolish boy in tackling me, though I have to admit you have caught me off my guard, and so have got me in your power. But you won't be able to hold on to me long, I tell you that right now. The moment I am missed you will be arrested on sight, and then you'll be put through the third degree. In a word, Mr. Spencer, almost every move you make is being watched, and it was only by a lucky fluke that you carried out your plans to-night. So you see there is no need for me to make any bargain with you involving \$10,000 or any other sum."

Spencer uttered an imprecation.

"Are you telling the truth?" he said.

"I am. I have had you under observation for the last two weeks, for I was satisfied you were Mr. Sleek's right bower. Mr. Sleek is also being watched. If he tried to leave the city he would be arrested. So you see I've got you both in a net, from which you can't escape."

"You are only bluffing."

"All right. The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

"Give me \$5,000 and I'll furnish you with a statement that will pull you through."

"How about Mr. Simpson?"

"Never mind him. Let him go bag."

At that moment there came the sounds of feet overhead. Spencer started and looked apprehensively over his shoulder. Harry saw that he was startled by the sounds.

"What's troubling you, Mr. Spencer?" he asked sarcastically.

"No matter," said the lawyer's clerk, rushing toward the end of the cellar, leaving the lantern behind him.

His object was to make his escape, for after what the young banker had told him he scented detectives on his trail. And he was not wrong. He and his pals had been followed to Flatbush by a sleuth who witnessed the capture of Harry. Unable to save the boy single-handed, he had clung behind the cab, and was carried to the lone house where the boy was imprisoned. Taking note of the place, he made his way to a drugstore and communicated with Brooklyn police headquarters. Several officers were sent to meet him, and he guided them to the house, which they entered. Spencer was nabbed as soon as he came out of the cellar. Then he admitted that the young banker was a prisoner below, and Harry was speedily released.

Spencer was taken to headquarters and locked up, and Harry went home in the gray of the morning. Next day the lawyer's clerk was taken to New York. On the promise of a light sentence if he made a full confession, he declared that the deed of gift secured by Sleek was a forgery. On the strength of it Sleek was arrested. He denied the accusation, but was held for trial. Two days later he was found dead in his cell, the victim of a virulent poison, and he left a signed statement admitting everything, but accusing Spencer as his aider and abettor. Spencer sent for Harry and offered to sell him the secret of the money-box. Harry had in the meanwhile pulled the box to pieces, but failed to unravel the mystery.

"How much do you want for the information?"

"A thousand dollars," said Spencer.

"Is the secret worth that to me?"

"It's worth \$10,000."

"If it's worth that I'll give you the money."

"I'll take your word. You have pulled the box to pieces?"

"Yes."

"And you found nothing?" he said, with a grin.

"I admit it."

"The secret is in the cover. It is curved. Underneath the center, inside, a piece of tin has been carefully soldered. Tear that away carefully and you will find what is hidden there."

Harry hurried back to his bank and followed directions. When the false piece of tin was removed, out popped thirty fine diamonds and rubies. They were subsequently valued at about \$8,000. Spencer got his money, and two years in Sing Sing. Harry recovered all his father's property, which was worth about \$40,000. He and the old cashier held a jollification over the result. And so with the unraveling of the mystery of the money-box we close the story of the young banker.

Next week's issue will contain "THE SECRET CHART; OR, THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF THE CRATER."

CURRENT NEWS

DRUNKEN GEESE HELP AGENTS

A flock of booze wild geese filled up with moonshine mash attracted the attention of railroad graders near Republic, Wash., and Federal prohibition agents found the largest still yet discovered west of the Rockies.

The moonshiners had dumped the sour mash from the vats into a small lake about a half mile from their cabin, says the *Lions Falls Press*.

Some of it was not submerged, so it was eaten by wild geese on their autumnal migration. Their antics were so amusing the graders sought the cause and found remnants of the feast. The still, with a capacity of 490 gallons, was concealed in a canyon, the one path leading through tangled underbrush. Two alleged owners of the plant were arrested. To furnish abundant water for the condensers the bootleggers had piped it from the lake above them.

MADE FORTUNE DIGGING UP DEAD

A grim story of nocturnal disinterment of bodies from a local Negro cemetery in Atlanta,

Ga., theft of the caskets which were later resold, and reburying of the bodies, has been told to the police by Thurman Jones, Negro undertaker, who admitted he had been doing it for nearly a year.

Report of "casket snatching" in this cemetery have been current for weeks. The other night officers lay in wait and watched the "snatchers" at work.

The officers declared Jones and another Negro, Ed Ware, dug up two bodies, reburied them minus the coffin, and then drove away with the caskets.

Jones told police he and Ware had made a small fortune. He said Ware was the leader, and always told him what grave to open. Ware also is in jail, but refuses to talk.

Following publication of the story cemetery officials were flooded with requests from relatives of persons buried in the cemetery seeking disinterment permits to see if the caskets had been stolen.

"It all appeared so easy," Jones said, "and them dead niggers didn't know no better nohow, and besides, the money came in mighty handy."



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Held Down By Poverty

— OR —

A POOR BOY'S STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued).

Was there a connection between the two matters?

Thinking it over, Harry came to the conclusion that there was, and he did not doubt but that his interference with the theft of the cheeses had led to the attack.

"What am I to do?" he asked himself as he walked along.

"It's no use for me to move out of my neighborhood now for they know I'm working in Washington Market, and they can always keep track of me from there.

"It's useless to appeal to the police for protection, for the police are afraid of them.

"There's only one thing for me to do, and that is to watch out as sharply as possible, and to fight when I have to fight.

"Anyhow, I've had the better of all the encounters so far, and now that I'm on my guard it will not be so easy to put the gang on me. I've been fortunate up to the present time, so I'll keep my eyes wide open and trust to the luck that has carried me through so far."

When he got home his mother gazed at him wonderingly.

"Hit by an automobile, Harry?" she anxiously asked.

The boy had to laugh at the idea.

"I suppose I look like it, mother," he said, "but it was only a fight."

"Did you have a fight, Harry?" she asked.

"Yes, mother."

"Then there is nothing more to say," said this American mother, who thought it was the proper and manly thing for her son to defend himself with his fists when necessary.

"That's right, mother," said Harry, "except that it might comfort you to have a look at the other fellows."

"Were there more than one?"

Harry nodded assent, and then asked for his supper, for he did not want his mother to know that he had been attacked by a gang.

In the morning the lumps had somewhat subsided, but the patches were still on his face, and he presented a rather battered appearance when he walked in Crossman's establishment.

The moment he entered the place he happened to look up and to catch the eye of the bookkeeper.

The expression that Harry surprised on the man's face puzzled him.

He knew that with the bumps and patches that he would naturally cause a degree of surprise, but there was something more than sur-

prise in the expression of the bookkeeper's face.

It actually occurred to Harry that the man's face seemed to form the inquiry: "Is it possible that you are really here?"

The boy actually felt that the man's face expressed the words, and it at once flashed over his mind that from the moment of his introduction to Griggs that he had instinctively distrusted the man.

Moreover, the instant that Barrett saw him he started back, just as one might do who sees a ghost. Harry knew that he made an odd appearance with his bumps, scratches and patches, but was confident that there was nothing in his looks to create more than ordinary surprise, and in the case of both the bookkeeper and the porter, much more than ordinary surprise was expressed.

Harry Hale was a shrewd boy, and did not betray his thoughts in any way, but made it his business to walk past Tom Jackson and the other clerks in such a way as to make sure that they could see his battered countenance, and noted how they looked at him, which was in a very different way from that of the porter or the bookkeeper.

"Hello, Harry," cried Tom Jackson, looking at him with a grin. "Been flirting with a zenzine buggy?"

Harry shook his head, and went on his way, and the others looked at him and grinned, and asked him some humorous questions, but he gave them no satisfaction beyond saying that he had been in a row.

But he kept thinking quietly to himself while attending to his work, and when Mr. Crossman came in and walked into his private office the boy followed him in and came straight to the point at once, while the merchant was looking in surprise at his battered face.

"Mr. Crossman," he said, "I want to have a talk with you."

CHAPTER XIII.

Our Hero Talks Openly To The Commission Merchant Of His Suspicion.

"Talk right ahead, my boy," said Mr. Crossman, in the kindest manner, and with an expression of interest on his face. "You are a very level-headed lad, and what you say is generally worth listening to."

"I'm obliged to you for your good opinion," said Harry, "but I have been here such a short time that I hesitate to speak out."

"That's all right," said the commission merchant. "It is true that you have yet to complete your first week here, but in that time you have done more for me than those who have been with me for years, so do not be afraid to say what you want."

"Well, sir," said Harry, "I want to ask you if you have perfect confidence in Mr. Griggs?"

The merchant stared at him.

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

ATE 9 LOBSTERS AT SITTING

Harry Wohl of No. 85 Bayard street, New York, attacked eight lobsters on a \$20 wager at a restaurant at No. 87 Grove street. Then he ate a ninth for good measure and went home for supper.

Wohl put a well known gastronomic title under his belt recently when he took the east side championship beef stakes by devouring ten pounds of porterhouse. The champion is twenty-four, and has issued a challenge to all the long distance eaters of the world for a public contest in plain and fancy eating.

CORAL REEF OF AUSTRALIA WORLD'S WONDERS

The Great Barrier Coral Reef of Australia is one of the wonders of the world. Its total length is 1,200 miles. The width of the reef, or series of reefs, varies in different districts. In some places the distance from the mainland to the outer edge measures 240 geographical miles. In other places it narrows down to 30 miles, and at one or two isolated places it measures but 10 or 12 miles.

The Great Barrier Reef hides within its coral caves many treasures which will never come to light. Among these are Captain Cook's six guns, thrown overboard from the Endeavor when she was temporarily aground on a reef. The curious structure and vast extent of the reef were first made known by Cook. These guns are of classic interest to all Australians and the supposed vicinity of the disaster has been searched with the aid of divers many times without success.

BRING 5-POUND TOPAZ FROM BRAZILIAN MINE

A topaz weighing five pounds, remarkable not only for its size, but for its clearness, is among the specimens brought back to Chicago by Dr. Oliver C. Farrington, curator of the department of geology of Field Museum, who has just returned from an expedition to Brazil.

The expedition travelled 2,000 miles through the diamond, gold and precious stone fields, covering more than 300 miles through the mountains.

The specimens obtained include gold, diamonds, aquamarines, beryls, emeralds and topazes, besides a number of minerals of rare earths. Among the specimens, Dr. Farrington believes he has one or two minerals hitherto unknown.

The big five-pound topaz is one of a large number of enormous semi-precious stones obtained by the scientists, but in point of size is an infant compared to a twenty-six-pound topaz which they saw at one of the mines. The giant stone was valued at about \$575 a pound. Cut up and polished a first grade topaz is worth from 5 to \$10 a carat.

PRISONER FREED WITH \$400.

Tucked away in a little corner of civilization for twenty-eight years, living in the midst and yet wholly apart from it, William Webber of Reading, Pa., expressed no desire to view the achievements of the twentieth century as he stood before

the gates of the Eastern penitentiary, a free man, Dec. 23. His only wish, he said, was to be rushed to Logan, Pa., where he might spend Christmas with his sister.

Webber, or "Sunny Pete," as he was known in prison, was handed his pardon at the prison gates after he had completed his long road of farewells. It came fresh from the pen of Gov. Sproul, and in his pockets Webber also carried \$400 in new bank notes, a contribution from the 1,700 inmates of the institution. With it, he said, he expects to take up his residence with his aged mother in Harrisburg, after the short visit with his sister.

Webber was the oldest prisoner in point of servitude in the penitentiary. Convicted of the slaying of his father-in-law in Reading, he was sentenced to be hanged. Twenty-eight years ago, however, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He is 54. His wife still lives in Reading, but he declared he would not return there because of family difficulties. He expressed a desire to see his daughter, who was only a baby when he began his sentence. Neither his wife nor his daughter had visited him during his prison term.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.,

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The Cuban's Revenge

By KIT CLYDE.

One morning Mr. John Franklin, a wealthy citizen of Baltimore, received a letter informing him that his brother was dead and had bequeathed his fortune and his only daughter to his guardianship.

The news came to Mr. Franklin like a thunderbolt.

His brother he had not even heard of, much less seen, for nearly twenty-five years before, when he had emigrated to South America.

As, however, he had left behind him a fortune of nearly a million dollars, his brother at once wrote a reply to the administrators of the will accepting the trust reposed in him, and inviting his niece to take up her abode at his house.

A few weeks later the young lady arrived.

She was a tall, handsome girl of probably between seventeen and eighteen, but looking older.

She was attended by an old woman, a native of the place where she had been born, and who had been her nurse since infancy.

Nearly six months passed away.

The young lady had a very reserved manner about her, and made friends with no one.

She was icily polite, but no more, and even her guardian appeared to stand somewhat in awe of her imperious temper.

One condition of the will that must not be forgotten was, that in the event of the testator's daughter dying or marrying before the age of twenty-one, all the property was to revert to his brother.

The personal habits of Mr. Franklin were very luxurious.

Although married several years, he had no children, and occupied a suite of rooms upon the same floor as his niece.

The apartments of his wife were on the floor below.

One morning after his niece had been an inmate of his house for nearly a year, when his valet came to assist him to dress, a valuable diamond stud he had worn on the previous evening could not be found, and apparently much annoyed and agitated at his loss, Mr. Franklin had at last to go down to the breakfast-room without it.

Arrived there he found his wife already awaiting him, but his niece had not yet made her appearance.

The circumstance was singular, as the young lady was in the habit of rising early.

Inquiry also elicited the fact that neither had her attendant been seen, and with a vague unformed fear in their minds, Mr. Franklin and his wife proceeded to their niece's apartments.

They found the door locked and the loudest knocking could elicit no response.

Surprised and alarmed, they at once had the door broken in, when a ghastly spectacle met their eyes.

Upon the floor, robed only in her night-dress and weltering in a pool of blood, lay the heiress, dead; while upon the bed in the adjoining room was found the old woman, stabbed to the heart.

The police authorities were at once communicated with, and immediately took possession of the apartments.

Detectives were instantly set upon the case, and in the course of a few hours the result of their investigations pointed but to one conclusion.

It was her uncle who was the assassin.

The case against him was so clear that there could hardly exist a doubt of his guilt.

In the first place there was the clause in the will which named him as the heir in case of his niece dying before the age of twenty-one.

From the evidence of one of the servants, it was proved that two or three days previously the murdered girl and he had a violent quarrel.

She had accused him of appropriating some of the money given into his hands in trust to his own use, and threatened that if he did not make the amount abstracted good before three days she would expose him.

The three days had expired on the very morning on which she had been found murdered.

An investigation of his accounts showed that he had abstracted more than twenty thousand dollars of the girl's legacy.

Taken altogether, this was proof enough of a possible motive, but a more direct proof of his actually having done the deed was coming.

Entangled in the embroidery of the murdered girl's night-robe was found the missing diamond stud.

Of this circumstance he could not give the slightest explanation.

He seemed literally stricken dumb with terror.

His arrest followed, as a matter of course, and he was lodged in jail to await his trial.

The verdict of the public was, without exception, against him.

Only one person believed in his innocence, and that was his wife.

Although their married life had been far from a happy one, she could not forget the days when he had loved her, and almost frantic with grief, she sought the aid of a famous private detective.

In this, as in all other mysterious cases, the only way of proceeding was to evolve a theory and then set to work to prove whether or not it was correct.

In this theory the fundamental basis clearly had to be that the accused was innocent.

Who, then, was guilty?

The answer to this question could only be gained by a knowledge of the murdered girl's history.

It was possible that the murder might have been caused by jealousy, revenge, a hundred motives other than that of cupidity, which the government detectives had taken as the true one.

By this time the bodies of the murdered heiress and her attendant had been laid out for interment, and the police authorities had given up their possession of the apartments.

The request of the detective, therefore, that he might be allowed to examine the trunks and property of the dead girl was granted, and he at once began his search.

For a long time his search was fruitless, and he was almost beginning to despair, when in a secret drawer of a portable desk, he found what might develop into a clue.

It was a portrait of a young man of about twenty-seven or eight, a man with dark, swarthy face and a somewhat evil expression of countenance.

Encouraged by the circumstances, he redoubled his exertions, and was once more rewarded by finding, in an interstice between the drawers, where it had evidently been overlooked, a fragment of a letter.

It was but a few inches square, yet it bore the signature:

"Your husband, Gonsalvo Fernandez."

With this in his hands, the detective jumped to a conclusion at once.

The girl had secretly been married to the writer of the letter, and now wished to ignore the ceremony.

The husband, with his passionate southern blood set on fire by the wrong, had resorted to threats, and at last to murder, for revenge.

Retaining the portrait, his next move was to find out if the original was in the city.

If he were, the case became clear at once; if he were not, it was an additional mystery.

Inquiring at all the offices of the South American steamships, he at last learned that a man answering to the description had landed about a week previously, and much encouraged by this confirmation of his suspicions, he redoubled his exertions to trace him to his present place of concealment.

At last, after many disappointments, he learned that at the Hotel Espanol, a Cuban named Jose Manuella, had been staying for the last two weeks.

His description tallied exactly with that of the man he was after, and he lost no time in proceeding to the hotel.

As he entered, the supposed Cuban was at the clerk's desk, and a moment's glance was sufficient to show him he was the original of the portrait.

Crossing the room with rapid footsteps, he laid his hand on his shoulder.

"You are my prisoner, Gonsalvo Fernandez," he said. "I arrest you for the murder of your wife and her servant."

For a moment the Cuban stood utterly overcome by surprise, but the next a long, keen knife had flashed from his breast, and was poised above the detective's head.

"Trapped!" he cried. "But I never will be taken alive."

Already the knife was descending, but with a rapid movement the detective stepped aside, striking the prisoner as he did so a blow with the butt of his revolver upon the temple that felled him to the ground.

The next instant the handcuffs were locked upon his wrists, and as soon as he recovered consciousness he was placed in a hack and safely lodged in jail.

For a long time he maintained an obstinate silence, but at last he confessed that he was the husband of the murdered girl.

He had married her secretly, and upon her father's death she had sought to deny the fact that she was his wife.

Almost frantic with jealous rage he had followed her to America, and when she still refused to acknowledge him as her husband, had committed the murderous deed.

The diamond stud he had found lying upon the floor, and thinking it might belong to some one in the house, had picked it up and placed it in the lace of her night-robe in order to still further divert suspicion.

His precautions had been useless, however, and two months later he suffered death upon the scaffold.

Mr. Franklin was at once released from his unjust captivity, and his wife and he, drawn together by the terrible calamity that for a time overshadowed them, have ever since lived in rejuvenated love and happiness.

WHALE HUNTING ON THE TOP OF THE WORLD

On the shore of the Arctic Ocean at the extreme northern point of Alaska lives a tribe of Eskimos who are declared to be the greatest whale hunters in the world. These hardy natives brave the dangers of the Arctic seas in open boats, skirting treacherous ice floes, facing deadly blizzards in search of game, which they often pursue scores of miles from land.

Whales are hunted in the Arctic in May and June, when the ice fields have broken up and swept southward into Bering Sea, and again in September, before winter seals the ocean with its impenetrable cap of ice. The mammals enter the extreme northern waters when the ice goes out in the spring, and stay until the ice returns. But the Eskimo pursues the whale when it appears early in the season, then turns his attention to seal and duck hunting, returning to the hunt for the mammals in the fall to fill his larder for the long winter.

With sails hoisted to the wind, the boats to the number of 10 or 12, each carrying three or four hunters armed with rifles, depart out from the Arctic Ocean. They spread out over a vast area fully 50 miles square. Each boat carries a flag, and when a whale is struck the signal is hoisted, whereupon all the other boats hasten to the assistance of the fortunate hunters. Usually the whale has been killed by the time the other boats come up.

A few of the Eskimo hunters have whaling guns, which shoot an explosive harpoon that instantly kills. Others have only their rifles or spears, with markers and buoys consisting of seal skins inflated with air.

When a whale is captured the boats of the hunters assemble at the scene as quickly as they can. The boats are lined out, with sails up, each towing the other, the dead whale bringing up the rear, and the slow voyage homeward is begun. When shore is reached, the whale must be cut up in the water, since there are not enough men to drag the great carcass up on the shore.

When the whaling season is over, each successful hunter gives a na-lu-ka-tak (celebration), with the rest of the villagers as his guests. There is feasting, blanket tossing, and a dance at the end of the program, which often lasts for days. All the old men and women, and the sick Eskimos are guests of the prince of the whale hunt. Those not able to walk are carried by the men or hauled on sheds to that part of the village selected for the feast—Lawrence William Penrose, in the *Popular Mechanics Magazine*.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

SEVEN POUNDS OF MISTLETOE ON ONE BIG STALK

A large stalk of mistletoe was found recently by S. G. Ellis on what is known as "Nine Mile Island, Ind. The stalk weighed seven pounds, and every twig contained a cluster of pearl-like berries. The mistletoe was found in an elm tree and was sixty-five feet from the ground. Mr. Ellis climbed the tree and cut the stalk from the branch on which it was growing.

CHASED BY BEAR

Arthur Heuss of Yorktown, N. Y., showed friends the carcass of a 300-pound black bear, a trophy of an exciting fight in the Adirondack Mountains. Heuss told friends that he was surprised by the bear, which approached him from behind. Heuss fired. The shot only slightly wounded the animal, which became enraged and ran at Heuss. Heuss, in trying to escape, fell and broke his gun. His shout brought Bert Vos, who dispatched the bear.

CLOCK VARIES ONLY SECOND IN 18 YEARS

An astronomical clock must keep more nearly perfect time than any other instrument. The makers of such clocks must consider how much effect slight changes in the temperature and in the pressure of the air will have upon the oscillation of the pendulum, says the *Kansas City Star*. There have been prepared elaborate tables that show the weights of dry and moist air at varying temperatures and atmospheric pressures.

There is a Rieffer clock at Potsdam in which virtually all the influences that affect the swinging pendulum, no matter how minutely, are compensated for. The pendulum of this astronomical clock swings with such precision that after 576,000,000 seconds (more than eighteen years) the error of the clock is only one second.

FRANCE MAY DEVELOP COLONIES

A proper development of her rich colonies would help France fill the gap made by the waste

of the general war, is the argument advanced by Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies, who is known in the United States because of his work at the Washington Disarmament Conference. M. Sarraut is the leader in an effort to so equip French colonies that in case of another war France would not depend on the outside world for her stocks of food, coal and other supplies.

The French colonies in Africa and Asia are slightly larger than the United States, with a total of 56,000,000 inhabitants. Through protectorates and otherwise France controls above 40 per cent. of the continent of Africa. According to M. Sarraut, the richest of all French colonies is Indo-China, with a population of 10,000,000 people and an area six times that of the State of Alabama.

M. Sarraut has a bill before Parliament to bring about the development of France's colonies, their mines, forests and agriculture, a program which would require 3,000,000,000 francs. If France could arrange matters with Germany so she would be sure of no further invasions, this money would be forthcoming by reductions in the national budget, M. Sarraut declares.

The native populations of French colonies are described as well disposed toward their rulers, so much so that President Millerand recently made a trip through the African possessions of the republic in perfect safety.

LAUGHS

"Please don't bother to see me to the door," pleaded the departing visitor. "Really, it's no bother at all," the hostess assured her. "It is a pleasure."

A school-teacher in London received the following letter from the father of one of her pupils: "Dear Teacher: Please excuse Fritz from staying home. He had the measles to oblige his father."

"You ate all your own cake and Mabel's too, Tommie," said the mother. "Yes'm," replied Tommie. "You'll be sick, child." "Well, mother, you see if anybody was going to be sick I didn't want it to be Mabel."

An eminent authority on inebriety, on being asked to decide the question, "When is a soldier drunk?" declared that an enlisted man is intoxicated if he staggers slightly in his walk; but if an officer, while lying on the floor, can hold on without falling off, he is sober.

"And how," asked the Sunday-school teacher, "did Noah spend his time on the ark?" Little Johnny, thinking of the expanse of waters, had an idea: "Fishing!" he suggested. "Aw!" spoke up young Tommy in disgust, "a lot of fishin' he'd do with only two worms!"

"Well," said he, anxious to make up their quarrel of yesterday, "aren't you curious to know what's in this parcel?" "Not very," replied his wife indifferently. "Well, it's something for the one I love the best in the world." "Ah, I suppose it's those new collars you said you needed."

GOOD READING

FISHING WITH DRUGS

The most curious method of fishing is that employed by the natives who inhabit the upper reaches of the rivers of the Malay Peninsula.

When they decide to go fishing they send messengers to the other villages down the river to warn them that the water is going to be poisoned. Then two kinds of trees are "tapped" for their sap. Although the saps are quite harmless apart, when the two are mixed with the waters of the river they become a strong, stupefying drug.

This drug is thrown into the river, turning it milky white, and immediately all the fish come to the surface—doped. Canoes are used to collect the fish, for in a few hours the stream has cleared and the fish have revived.

The river Tigris contains surprising numbers of huge fish, which are sought eagerly by the natives.

The ordinary methods of hook and line do not appeal to the Arab, who likes to do things in the easiest possible manner. He uses a net occasionally, but that is of little use for catching the real big fellows.

When he goes after them he proceeds to ground-bait the river with dough; not the innocent compound of flour and water used for making bread, but a thick, sticky paste, into which a quantity of opium has been mixed.

Any fish that makes a meal of this is quickly stupefied and floats to the surface. The fisherman then mounts an inflated goat skin and goes out to collect his bag.

Things have not changed much on the Tigris in the last 3,000 years. The boats used now are identical in shape with those seen in Babylonian sculptures.

WHEAT FIELDS NOW MARK SITE OF CAIN CITY

Once upon a time there was a town known as Cain City in the northwest corner of Rice county, Kan., near where the town of Bushton stands now.

Cain City was in its heyday the uproariest, wickedest town in this otherwise peaceable and orderly section of Kansas. It was a wide open town with eight saloons and as many more places which some folks might call dens of vice and iniquity.

It was the sportiest community in this section, too. There was a race-track built just out of town. There was a fine string of racehorses. One could get any kind of a game there—foot race, horse race, poker game, anything—and all with high wagers attached. Raising Cain at Cain City was an every day incident.

One of the first newspapers in that vicinity was at Cain City. It was called the Cain City *Razzooper*, and was edited by William McCue from New York. Matt Maes, who now lives on the Ed Norris farm, used to stick type for the *Razzooper*. When the Missouri Pacific Railroad officials arrived to look over the place and decide whether to put a depot in there the town had made great preparations to impress them and had farmers from all around in town with lumber wagons hauling out lumber, buying quantities of

groceries and other goods at the stores and giving an air of great prosperity to the village. They hauled lumber out the front gate of the yard in plain sight of the railroad officials and hauled it around behind out of their sight and unloaded it again. The women were parading the streets in numbers and the officials granted their request for a depot without any hesitation.

The town was built in the late '70s on land belonging to Roger Cain. Mr. Cain bought forty acres about a half mile south on the railroad and the town was moved bodily to the new location. For ten years or so Cain City was a real live town, but it then went down hill rapidly. There is nothing left of Cain City now. The townsite is a wheat field. Many even of those living around Bushton and Claflin have forgotten that there ever was such a town.

NEW CAVERNS IN SHENANDOAH VALLEY

The exhibition of caverns to the travelling public is noted by the United States Geological Survey as of growing interest in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

The latest opened caves have been named Shenandoah Caverns, according to a writer in *Science*. They are about three miles south of Mount Jackson and two miles west of the Valley Pike, with which they are connected by a macadamized road. The visitor descends into these caverns by a concrete stairway and soon sees the first stalactites, which appear as silent daggers of crystallized lime carbonate, hanging like icicles from points where surface water drips from the limestone roof. At the foot of the stairs is the spacious anteroom to a long chain of high-vaulted chambers connected by narrow passageways, forming in general plan a gigantic letter S, all illuminated by cleverly concealed lights. Attractive natural decorations are found in every room. Here the side walls are covered by fluted veneer done in crystal stucco, there in graceful drapery hang creamy lambrequins in ruddy-tinted stripes. From place to place, singly or in groups, are pendant stalactites and uprising stalagmites—the first inverted narrow cones fed by trickling films of lime-bearing water; the second pillars or columns fed by spattering drops of the water. In one room midway down the chain the show piece is a narrow thirty-foot cascade of white, glittering crystal flanked by twin falls of pale translucent ochre. At the base and to the rear of this diamond cascade, visible by peering between slender columns of Oriental alabaster, is the "Fairy's Secret," a tiny pool illuminated in due season by animated torches, presumably carried by a brood of phosphorescent larvae of some insect, perhaps a small fly that is commonly present in such caverns. At the end of the developed portion of the cavern a chamber of high vaulted roof suddenly gives place to a low-ceiled room containing a lakelet in which are mirrored a multitude of delicate stalactites—a pool of a thousand crystal pendants.

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

ANTELOPES INCREASE IN CANADIAN PRESERVES

Government plans to prevent the extinction of antelope in western Canada are proving successful, and the preserves created at Foremost, Alta, in 1918 with fifty animals in captivity now holds 130 head. Known as the Nemiskam Park, the preserve comprises nine square miles, and the steady growth of the herd and the absence of disease is good evidence that the experiment is likely to result in saving this most interesting species from the extermination which otherwise inevitably awaits it.

Swifter than the greyhound in flight, exceedingly graceful and beautiful, the antelope has for many years been a prize for the big game hunter and its numbers have been diminishing of late years with a rapidity that has aroused the concern of all lovers of wild life.

Ten years ago Dr. W. T. Hornaday, the American naturalist, estimated that there were 2,000 antelope in Western Canada. To-day there are reported to be only about 1,000 in a wild state in Alberta and 250 in Saskatchewan, while they entirely disappeared from the province of Manitoba some years ago.

HEAD HUNTERS TURN FISHERMEN

British North Borneo was described at a lecture held in London recently at the Society of Arts by Major Owen Rutter, who traced the development of Borneo from the days of the pirates and head-hunters of fifty years ago to its present state of commercial prosperity, reports *The London Times*.

Major Rutter said that to-day the pirates are no more, and the head-hunters have ceased to raid. Their descendants are fishermen or farmers; many of them have joined the native police. To-day the seas of Borneo are as safe as the Solent, and its jungle paths no less secure than the pavement of Pall Mall.

The people live at peace. There are government stations all over the country, little towns have grown up, rubber, tobacco and cocoanut estates have been made. Harbor works have been constructed. The hill country has been opened up by means of bridle paths. There are more than one hundred miles of railway, and, although the country has suffered in the past for lack of roads, these are in the making now.

Speaking of the rubber industry, which is North Borneo's chief commercial asset, Major Rutter said the prevailing rubber slump had hit companies operating in North Borneo hard, as it had those elsewhere, but only one estate of any size had to close down.

NEW YORK ONCE UNDER WATER

The United States Geological Survey has discovered that New York City was once under water. Announcement to that effect was made in a Survey bulletin, but the Survey adds this reassuring note:

New Yorkers need not, however, feel alarmed about the ups and downs of the island, for this

submergence is not so very old geologically; the geologist thinks and speaks in terms of thousands and even millions of years."

The bulletin announcement reads:

"Though many people have a general idea that large parts of the United States have at times in the past been covered by the ocean, it is perhaps not so generally known that the continent is even now rising in some places and sinking in others. Not so very long ago, in a geologic sense, the Hudson River flowed through a deep canyon or gorge at New York City. Soundings show that this gorge extends through New York Harbor and far out to sea.

"The land surface in this region has evidently been lowered, allowing the ocean to creep in on the land, fill the old river channel and in places wholly submerge it.

"The ocean at one time submerged more of the land about New York than it does now, for in excavations made for some of the skyscrapers the remains of oysters and other salt water animals have been found. By the nature of the fossils thus found the paleontologists of the United States Geological Survey have been able to tell approximately when and how far the ocean invaded the land. They have found evidence of a submergence that was wider and older than that which now floods the ancient Hudson River gorge."

SAVED FROM BOILING POT

An amazing story—which may or may not be true—of how three young Oxford graduates were "plucked from the boiling" at the hands of cannibals was related recently in "Truth."

Three men who were engaged in missionary work in Borneo, or Papua, were captured by the natives who trussed them up and prepared to make a feast of them. Three large fires were being started. Three pots were produced, and knives sharpened, when suddenly there arrived on the scene a huge negro more elaborately apparelled than the others.

He was evidently the chief of the tribe. He seemed at first much pleased at the situation, says the story, but after examining the captives he called a palaver at which it was clear he was objecting to their being cooked.

He silenced the opposition to his views by bludgeoning the dissenters and finally secured the release of the missionaries.

The narrative proceeds:

"Then the chief said in good English with a slight Oxford drawl:

"I am very sorry you have been inconvenienced, gentlemen, but all is well now. These warriors will see you safely back to your missionary station. And so good-by."

"Then he whispered aside:

"I'm dressed so differently that probably you do not recognize me, but I recognize you well enough. You were along with me at Balliol three years ago, and of course no Balliol man could think of eating a fellow Balliol man."

ECTS CAUSE MINIATURE RAIN

A "Rainfall" over an area only ten feet square was recently reported in Alexandria, Va. Protesting at the fanciful explanations and the mystery that has been thrown about this phenomenon, Dr. W. J. Humphreys, Professor of Meteorological Physics of the United States Weather Bureau, declares that plant lice produce the supposed "rain."

These insects are found on sycamore and other trees by the thousands. They are little brown mites three-sixteenths to one-eighth of an inch long, which suck the sap from the leaves and squirt it out of their bodies. This secretion is the liquid that appears to be rain.

The liquid produced by plant lice is of a honey dew consistency and stays on the pavement or ground much longer than would the same amount of rain water. It has been suggested that something of this sort made the famous manna of the Israelites in their flight through the wilderness from Egypt.

Rain seldom falls in a ground-wetting shower over an area of less than one square mile, although a few drops may fall over a much smaller area, says Dr. Humphreys.

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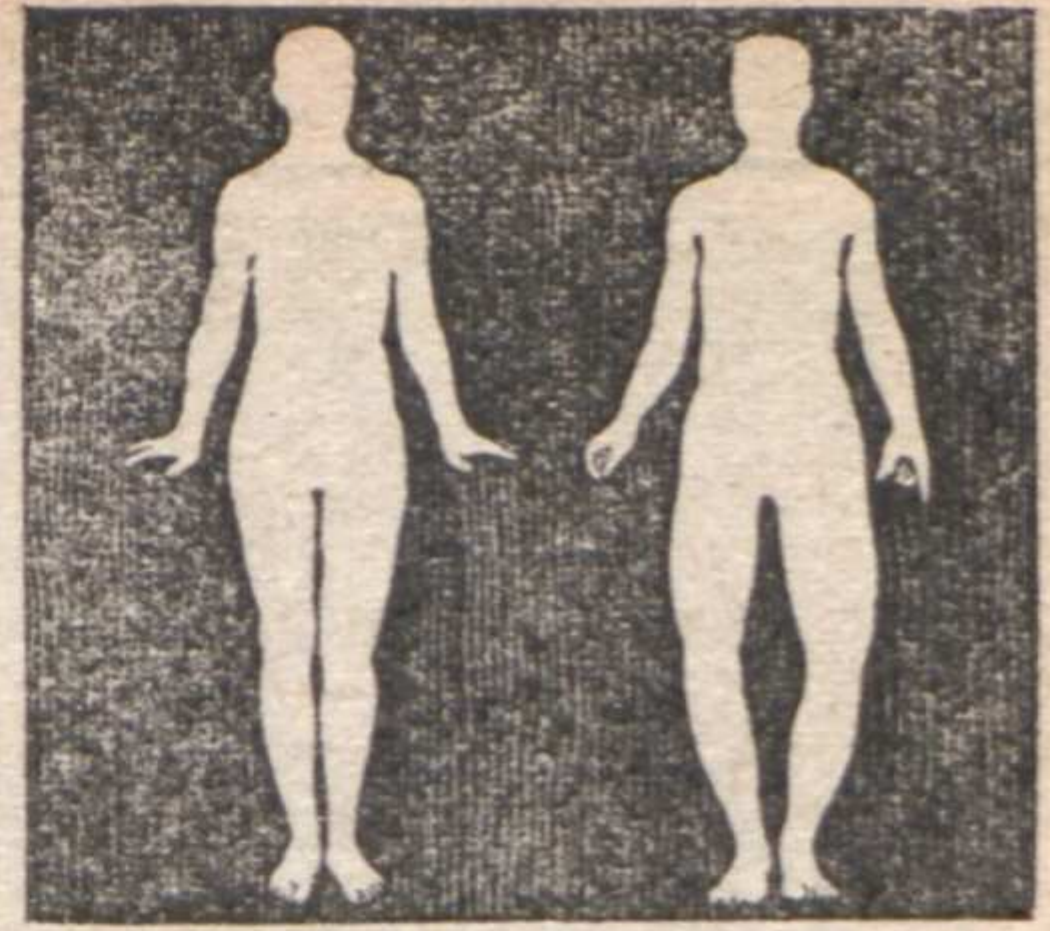
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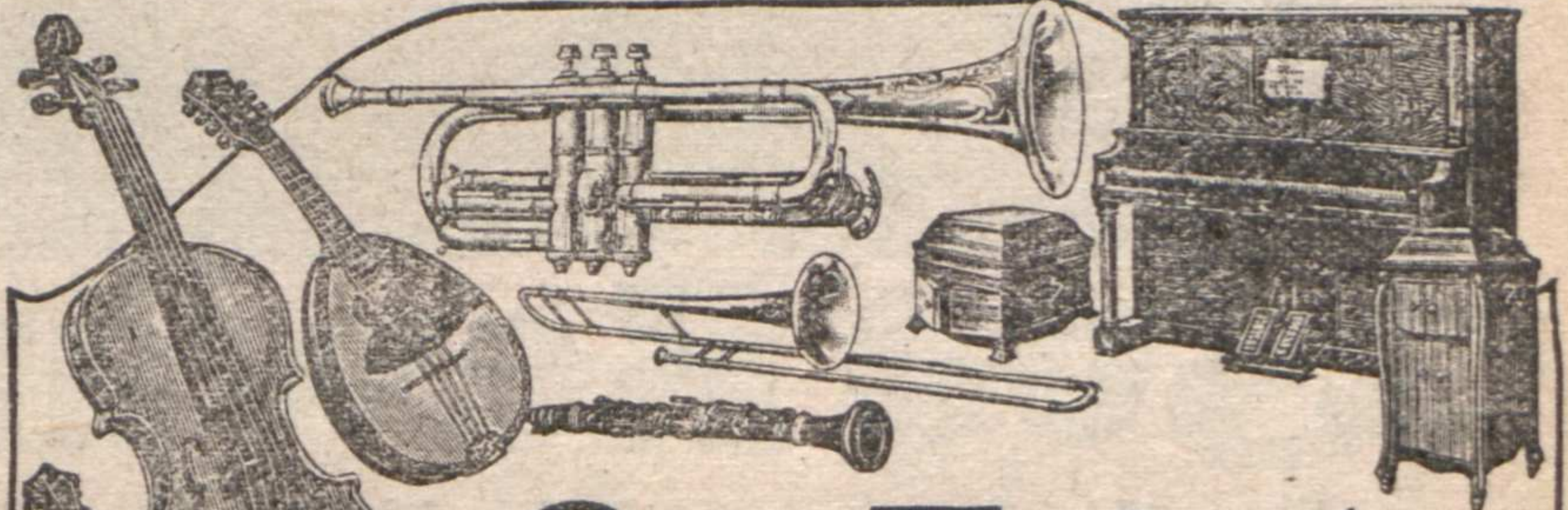
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